

*"If you have doubts about our
grandeur, look at our edifice."*

From the *Makhl' al-sa' dayn wa-majma'-i Bahruzyn*
of the Timurid historian Abdul-Razzaq Samarqandi





TIMUR¹⁶⁰ AND THE

PRINCELY VISION

Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century

Thomas W. Lentz and Glenn D. Lowry

LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART

ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY

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COVER

Humay and Humayun in a Garden
(cat. no. 34, detail)
Herat, c. 1430
Paris, Collection Musée des Arts
Décoratifs, Inv. 3727

FRONTISPIECE

Sanctuary dome of the *maqsad-i shahi* of
Timur, Samarqand, c. 1398–1405

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Foreword

For Western audiences Timur remains one of the great unknown figures of world history. Better known in Europe and America as Tamerlane, he has been the romanticized subject of plays by Christopher Marlowe (1587) and Jacques Pradon (1691), operas by Alessandro Scarlatti (1706) and George Frideric Handel (1724), and a poem by Edgar Allan Poe (1827).

In reality Timur was a dynamic, charismatic Central Asian warlord who in the latter part of the fourteenth century embarked on a series of conquests that transformed much of Asia. Proclaiming himself a pious Muslim while simultaneously exploiting the daunting Mongol legacy of Chingiz (Genghis) Khan, Timur led a powerful army of Turco-Mongol warriors out of the steppes. He conquered much of the Middle East, sacked Delhi, humbled the Ottoman Turkish empire, and was preparing to invade China when he died suddenly in 1405. For the remainder of the fifteenth century most of Iran and Central Asia were ruled by the Timurids, Timur's descendants who struggled to maintain the empire.

Timur's conquests resulted in the movement of a large number of artists and craftsmen to his court at Samarqand. Under his patronage and that of his descendants a new and highly refined visual language emerged that celebrated the elite and articulated its vision of might and grandeur. The staggering military successes of the conqueror have been the subject of specialist studies, but no exhibition has yet undertaken a comprehensive examination of the cultural policies that created this dynastic art, one that formed a sophisticated facade of splendor and cultural authority that lasted well beyond the life of the ruling house. This exhibition is the first to investigate how Timur, a Turkic tribesman, and his successors created a Persian art and architecture that came to be revered as a model for later patronage and artistic developments in much of Western and Central Asia.

The splendid paintings, objects, and trappings that ornamented the courts of Timur and his successors

have long been dispersed. Many are now reunited here for the first time in centuries. This in large part is due to the unprecedented cooperation of three countries whose extraordinary artistic wealth has rarely been combined in one exhibition. We are particularly indebted to the Ministry of Culture of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Turkey for approving and facilitating important loans from museums under their supervision. We are grateful as well to the General Egyptian Book Organization of the Arab Republic of Egypt for allowing the extraordinary *Bustan* manuscript of 1488 to be included. It is also because of the generosity of those museums and private collectors listed elsewhere in this volume that a project of this scope and quality has been possible.

This exhibition is the result of more than four years of research and planning by Thomas W. Lentz, curator of Ancient and Islamic Art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and Glenn D. Lowry, curator of Near Eastern Art at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and the Freer Gallery of Art. The catalogue text, the selection of objects, and the organization of the exhibition represent their work. Peter Brenner of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, whose superb on-site photography graces many of this catalogue's pages, has brought to life for modern viewers the seductive power of Timurid art. *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century* has received major support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Smithsonian Special Exhibition Fund. We are also grateful to the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities for indemnification of the foreign loans. Through the collaboration of these individuals and institutions, the catalogue and exhibition provide many of us with a first glimpse of the wonders of a brilliant but little-known phase in the history of art.

Milo C. Beach
DIRECTOR
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

Earl A. Powell III
DIRECTOR
Los Angeles County
Museum of Art

Acknowledgments

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Timur and the Princely Vision is the result of several years of research, negotiations, and planning. It is with pleasure that we acknowledge those individuals and institutions who made both the exhibition and catalogue that accompanies it possible. Early support from Milo Cleveland Beach, director of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, and Earl A. Powell III, director of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, was critical to the success of this project. Grants from the Smithsonian Scholarly Studies Program, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute of Turkish Studies permitted us to research Timurid art and architecture of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Major awards from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Smithsonian Special Exhibition Fund and an indemnification from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities allowed the catalogue and exhibition to achieve their present form. We are deeply grateful for these sources of support.

No project of this scope is possible without the guidance and encouragement of colleagues and friends. Special thanks are due to Wheeler M. Thackston, whose many translations of Persian and Turkic sources are included in the catalogue and without whose advice and knowledge this project would have been inconceivable. We hope that *Timur and the Princely Arts* also reflects the insights and information so generously shared with us by David Alexander, Lisa Golombek, Oleg Grabar, Basil Gray, Ernst Grube, Linda Komaroff, Beatrice Manz, Roya Marefat, Christopher Murphy, Gulru Necipoglu, Bernard O'Kane, Ralph Pinder-Wilson, Yasaman Qashqa'i, B. W. Robinson, Marianne Shreve Simpson, Eleanor Sims, Priscilla Soucek, Maria Subtelny, and John Woods among others.

At the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery we thank Emily Dyer, Thomas Bower, and Harriett McWilliams, who calmly and efficiently handled the monumental task of coordinating the logistics of an exhibition composed almost entirely of borrowed works of art. A variety

of other important duties at the gallery were deftly carried out by Patrick Sears, assistant director for exhibitions and facilities, and John Zelenik of the Design Department; Thomas W. Chase, Jane Norman, Stephen Koob, and Paul Jett of the Technical Laboratory; and Esin Atil, Le Pettipaw, Susan Nemazee, Gail Price, Marjan Adib, Rocky Korr, and George Rogers. At the Los Angeles County Museum of Art we are indebted to the efforts of Jonathan Rabinovitz and Mitch Tuchman, who skillfully edited the catalogue. Many of its superb photographs were provided by Peter Brenner, who worked under often difficult circumstances. Sandy Bell of the Graphic Design Department brought her elegant and imaginative aesthetic sensibility to the design of the catalogue, and we are particularly grateful for the long hours she devoted to the book. Bernard Kester and Arthur Owens applied their considerable talents to the design and installation at the museum. A multitude of tasks were efficiently executed by Lisa Kalem of the Registrar's Office; Elizabeth Algermissen, assistant director; John Passi, head of Exhibition Programs; Victoria Blyth-Hill and Steve Cristin-Poucher of the Conservation Center; and Les Donnell, Jennifer McNeil, Wendy Owen, Mary Katherine Aldin, Doris Bryant, Pamela Jenkinson, Suzanne Wright, Tom Jacobson, and Alla Hall.

It is to the private collectors (including several who wish to remain anonymous) and the curators and trustees of the institutions who so willingly lent us works from their collections that we owe our greatest debt of gratitude. We are particularly indebted to the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Turkey, the Ministry of Culture of the USSR, and the General Egyptian Book Organization for generously allowing us to borrow from their rich and important collections. We wish to thank here, as well, the Honorable Sukru Elekdag, the ambassador of Turkey, the Honorable Yuri Dubinin, the ambassador of the USSR, and the Honorable El Sayed Abdel Raouef El-Reedy, the ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt for their support and encouragement of our work. Most of the objects that these countries have lent to *Timur and the Princely Vision* have never been displayed in the United States before, and it is both a privilege and honor to include them in this exhibition.

In this country we are grateful to the Estate of Arthur M. Sackler; Terese Bartholomew of the Avery

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In Turkey we are deeply indebted to Mustafa Tinaz

Tinaz, the minister of culture; Altan Akat, director general of antiquities and museums; Nurettin Yardımcı; Sabahattin Türkoglu, Filiz Cagman, Buket Beyoglu, and Emine Bılırgen of the Topkapi Sarayı Müzesi, Istanbul; Nazan Tapan Ölcer, director, and G. A. Kutlukan of the Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, Istanbul; Nurhan Atasoy of Istanbul University; and Muammer Ülker, director of the Süleymaniye Kutuphanesi, Istanbul. We wish to thank as well Rahmi Koc, Barbara Ther, and Sevgi Gönül for their invaluable assistance and hospitality, as well as Robert Milton and William Caveness at the American embassy in Ankara.

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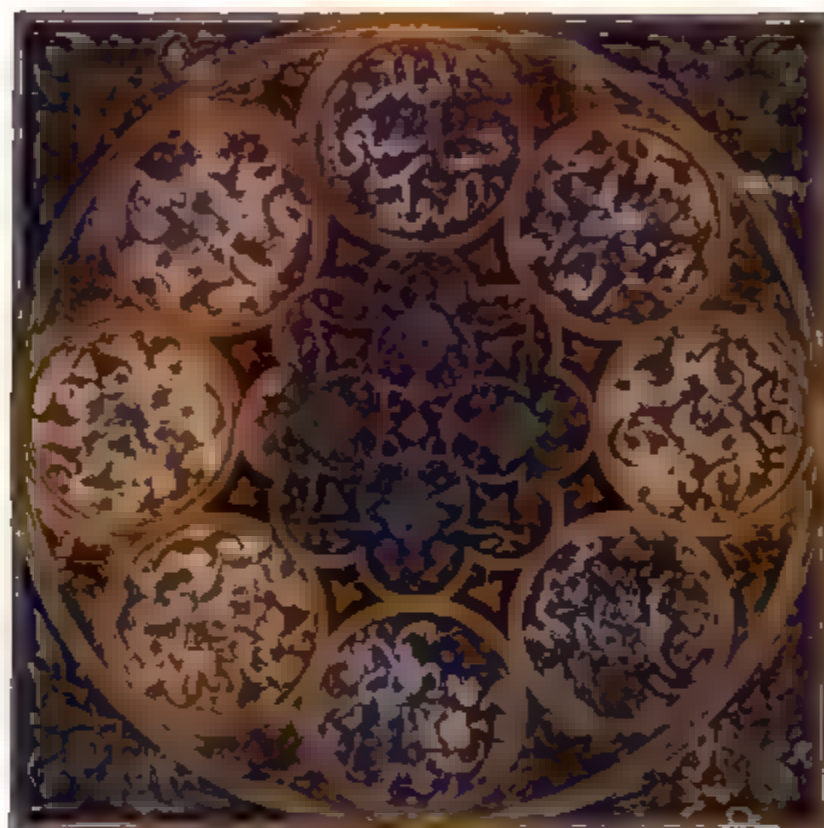
While it is impossible to mention all the people who aided us in this project in Washington and elsewhere, we are especially grateful to Francine Berkowitz, Cem Tarhan, Aleksander Potemkin, Hind Kuros, and Sonia and Hans Seherr-Thoss for their efforts on our behalf.

Finally we thank Susan, Nicholas, Alexis, and William Lowry for enduring lost holidays and endless telephone calls at all hours from coast to coast.

This catalogue and exhibition are dedicated to Frank Robinson, whose dedication to art has been a constant inspiration.

Thomas W. Lentz
Glenn D. Lowry

Introduction



The world is a garden for the state to master.
The state is power supported by the law.
The law is policy administered by the king.
The king is a shepherd supported by the army.
The army are assistants provided for by taxation.
Taxation is sustenance gathered by subjects.
Subjects are slaves provided for by justice.
Justice is that by which the rectitude of the
world subsists.'

SELF-AFFIRMING and absolute, this statement of kingship appears on a page in the *Nasaysh-i Iskandar* (The counsels of Alexander), an ethical treatise that outlines the principles of statecraft for Islamic rulers (cat. no. 1). Set against a brilliant blue background and enclosed in finely drawn gold circles, the aphorisms revolve around a pulsating central medallion and represent a royal mantra of power. Attributed to Aristotle and containing sayings ascribed

cat. no. 1

Nasaysh-i Iskandar
Herat¹), dated A.H. 829 (A.D. 1425).
f. 12a

to Alexander the Great, the book describes a closed, idealized, and abstracted world in which good government and political stability are the prerogative and result of princely rule. This is precisely the world that the great warlord Timur (1338–1405) and his descendants sought to create in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in their empire that spanned Central Asia and Iran.

Copied by the celebrated fifteenth-century calligrapher Ja'far al-Baysunghur, presumably for the Timurid prince Baysunghur (1399–1434), the *Nasayih-i Iskandar* is typical of the works of art produced for the Timurids. With its elegant calligraphy, brilliant illumination, and powerful political message, the manuscript reflects the Timurid dynasty's aesthetic interests as well as the Timurid practice of using art as a vehicle for royal ideology. Luxurious and refined, the *Nasayih-i Iskandar* embodies the Timurid elites' vision of themselves as cultivated and powerful rulers.

The Timurids and their vision of kingship left a legacy that resonated throughout the eastern Muslim world for almost four hundred years. These Turco-Mongol warriors accommodated the seminomadic steppe traditions of their Central Asian origins to the urban institutions of Islamic Iran, the land they conquered, thus creating a new political and social order. Through this manipulation of nomadic and Islamic sources of power the Timurids established themselves as the legitimate rulers of Iran and Central Asia. They buttressed their claims to power by actively engaging in a broad program of cultural patronage. The early realization that there was a direct relationship between cultural prowess and political prestige allowed the Timurids to develop one of the most sophisticated courts in the history of the Muslim world. Technically refined and visually arresting, the objects made for the elite members of the dynasty are among the most sumptuous and brilliant works of art ever created. It was this image of the dynasty as an unparalleled artistic force that later ruling powers sought to emulate.

Yet the Timurids ruled a diminishing empire for little more than a century. How were they able to project such a convincing image of power in the Persianate² world? How did the dynasty articulate its dreams and ambitions? What were the social, political, and dynastic forces that shaped their artistic interests? What impact did Timur have on the way his descendants per-

ceived themselves and their position as a ruling class?

No study has seriously examined the Timurids' cultural policies. European interest in Timur has been almost exclusively limited to his military campaigns. Popularly known in the West as Tamerlane (a European corruption of the Persian Timur-i Lang, or Timur the Lame, a reflection of a youthful injury), Timur—and by extension his descendants—is often perceived as a ruthless, violent warlord, the “scourge of God.” While Timur's military campaigns and those of his immediate successors were undeniably brutal, this vision of the ruler and his heirs reveals only a part of their character and interests. The Timurids also possessed remarkable political and cultural talents, which were recognized and admired from the Mediterranean basin to the borders of China.

This catalogue and the accompanying exhibition attempt to present a more balanced interpretation of Timur and his descendants by focusing on the pivotal role that aesthetics played in defining the dynasty's goals. This book examines the ways in which architecture and works of art—illustrated and illuminated manuscripts, drawings, textiles, metalware, ceramics, and jade, stone, and wood carving—were used to reinforce and amplify the Timurids' vision of their dynasty. It concentrates on objects made for the princes and rulers of the dynasty, seeking to set them in a broad social and cultural context. The methodology underlying this study required examining the Timurids' artistic achievements from a variety of perspectives: aesthetic, political, and historical.

The first chapter explores Timur's impact on the world he conquered and the nature of his cultural ambitions. Subsequent chapters investigate the role of princely patronage under his son and successor, Shahrukh (1377–1447); the structure and function of the *kitabkhana* (royal library or workshop) in formulating and disseminating a coherent Timurid artistic vision; and the changes in taste and focus that occurred at Herat and elsewhere in the Timurid world during the second half of the fifteenth century. The final chapter examines the reverberations of Timurid artistic ideals at the Uzbek, Safavid, Ottoman, and Mughal courts.

Several issues that are central to understanding the dynasty's artistic interests emerge from this investigation of Timurid social, political, and cultural activities.

The first is the enduring legacy of Timur's achievements, both real and mythical. By reshaping the political, cultural, and military structure of most of Central Asia and Iran, the great warlord created a potent image of power that became intrinsic to the Timurids' perception of themselves.

A second but closely related issue is the relationship between Timurid ideology, as expressed by princely ambitions, and the arts. Through the adaptation, modification, and refinement of the great artistic traditions of Iran as well as those of Central Asia and to some extent China, the Timurid elite developed a sophisticated visual vocabulary that projected a carefully crafted princely vision. This vision was, in part, articulated through small, finely detailed objects intended for a limited audience, such as the illustrated manuscripts and luxury wares made for the Timurid elite. On a more public level the dynasty's ideology was conveyed through a spectacular building program.

A third issue is the degree to which the Timurids were able to reconcile their Turco-Mongol origins with the Persianate culture that they espoused. Tensions between the seminomadic and military values of Central Asia and the urban Islamic traditions of Iran were felt throughout the fifteenth century as the princes of the dynasty continually adjusted their vision of the world.

Underlying these three issues is the question of how the Timurids so deftly aligned their aesthetic concerns with their political objectives. In exploring this question the catalogue presents a series of hypotheses about the nature of artistic production under the Timurids; these hypotheses suggest a new model of creativity that differs from traditional approaches to this material. The book proposes that the Timurids used a restricted set of pictorial designs that were continually repeated to construct their images. This standard repertoire became stratified, the images separated into distinct idioms: each type of image used by the Timurids is governed by internal rules that affected the images' forms and expressions. Through a process of repetition and refinement these standardized forms became identified with specific aesthetic and ideological aspects of the dynasty. The book suggests that these aesthetic developments were the result of a complex and often subtle interaction between old seminomadic Turkic values and new Persianate ideals.

Timur and the Princely Vision is a first step toward understanding the relationship between Timurid art and its political and historical context. The basis for this work lies in the ideas and approaches of earlier twentieth-century scholars of Timurid art and several recent innovative studies of this period.¹ Many problems, however, still surround the study of the Timurids and their art. Key historical texts have yet to be thoroughly examined, and more research is needed for certain periods, particularly the long reign of Shahrukh. Knowledge of the arts under the Timurids—except for painting and architecture—remains cursory; a basic chronological classification of ceramics, textiles, and woodwork, for instance, has yet to be attempted. Consequently the hypotheses and conclusions developed here are tentative. They are presented to encourage more precise examinations of this remarkable dynasty and its extraordinary artistic achievements.

INTRODUCTION

NOTES

1. *Nasayih-i Iskandar*, Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ms.4183, f. 12a.

2. The term *Persianate* refers to all areas where Persian language and culture were dominant.

3. The authors are indebted to the important work of earlier scholars of Timurid art, history, and literature, particularly the numerous books and articles by Lisa Golombek, Basil Gray, Ernst Grube, Linda Komaroff, Beatrice Manz, A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, Bernard O'Kane, B. W. Robinson, Eleanor Sims, I. Stchoukine, Maria Subtelny, Wheeler Thackston, and John E. Woods.



Timur and the Image of Power

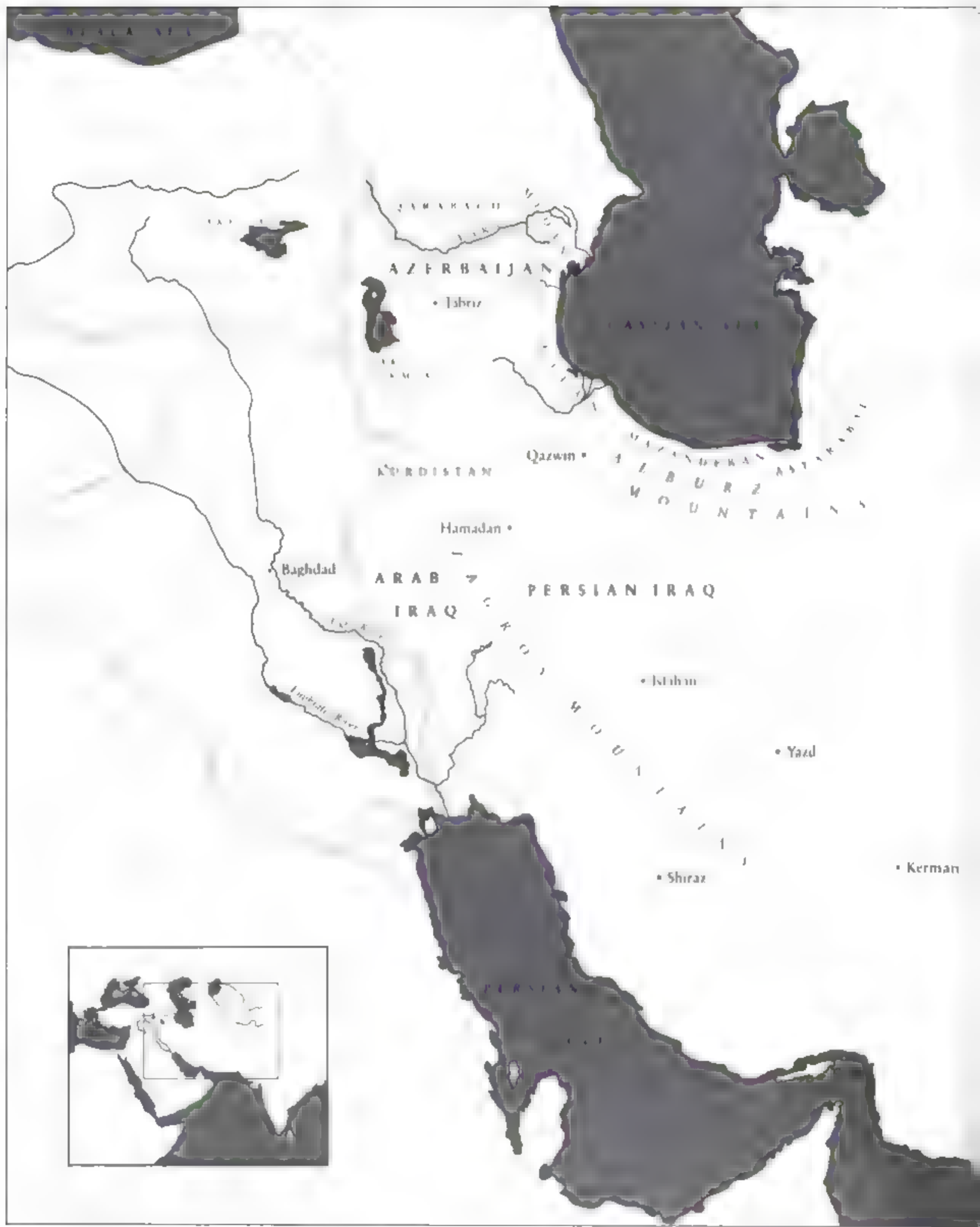
This king Timur is one of the greatest and mightiest of kings. Some attribute to him knowledge, others attribute to him heresy because they note his preference for “members of the House [of Ali],” still others attribute to him the employment of magic and sorcery, but in all this there is nothing; it is simply that he is highly intelligent and perspicacious, addicted to debate and argumentation about what he knows and also about what he does not know.¹

WRITTEN BY Ibn Khaldun, the celebrated Arab historian who met Timur on several occasions between 1401 and 1405, this description is a concise summary of the warlord’s complex personality and charismatic nature. Timur’s reign, which lasted less than four decades, left a legacy that endured for centuries, long after the last member of his dynasty had died. His dominance of Central Asia and Iran at the end of the fourteenth century had repercussions from the borders of China to Spain, as he redefined the political, social, and cultural landscape of the eastern Islamic world.

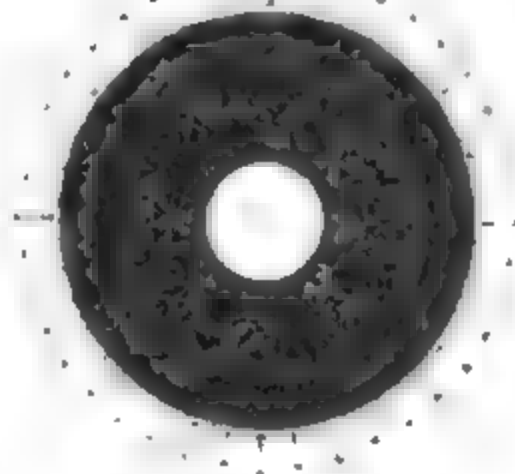
Before Timur rose to power, Iran and Central Asia were divided among an array of feuding dynasties and nomadic tribes. Although the region was permeated by Persianate culture with its urban and Islamic orientation, numerous nomadic and seminomadic groups of Turco-Mongol origin still played a major role in the area. Timur, a warlord of modest background, integrated the different groups and cultures into his domain, creating one of the largest empires in history. His many conquests stretched across Central Asia and Iran to Syria and Anatolia in the west and the plains of northern India in the east.

Timur’s descendants, who ruled most of Iran and Central Asia for much of the fifteenth century, inherited his political and cultural aspirations if not his military skills. In attempting to maintain the empire created by Timur, they brought the nomadic steppe cul-

Sanctuary tower and dome of the mausoleum of Timur (“Bibi Khayum”)
Samarkand, c. 1404–1405



१५



ture of Central Asia into more direct contact with the highly refined and settled civilization of Iran and its neighbors. The interaction of these forces led to the formation of an entirely new visual language under the Timurids which articulated their monarchical claims, religious commitments, and personal glory. The aura of splendor and authority they created ultimately affected the arts of the Islamic world from Ottoman Turkey to Mughal India.

It is impossible to appreciate the Timurids' artistic achievements without examining the profound impact that the dynasty's founder had on his descendants. As the fifteenth century progressed, Timur's life and accomplishments were transformed into a potent myth that became intrinsic to the dynasty's legitimacy. This myth, however, originated during Timur's reign, shaped by the historiography, rituals, and cultural practices that the warlord encouraged. The monuments that he built and the objects that were made for him must be viewed as part of an effort to create an image that would sustain his dynasty. This image needs to be understood in the context of the seminomadic steppe and the urban Persianate cultures that shaped his world.

Born April 8, 1336, at Khwaju Ighar near Shahr-i Sabz, Timur grew up and came to power in Transoxiana, a vast, then sparsely populated region bounded by the two great rivers of Central Asia—the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya (Oxus and Jaxartes).¹ The northern parts of Transoxiana consist of large tracts of desert and steppe, which were suitable only for pastoral nomadism, except around relatively modest oasis cities such as Khiva and Tashkent. Further south numerous small river valleys, often set against high mountains, provided more fertile land where settled populations had developed in and around cities like Samarqand (fig. 1) and Bukhara. Trade routes, such as the ancient silk road, crisscrossed this region linking the more important urban centers to one another and to Europe and China.

Timur spent his youth in the prairies and mountain slopes southwest of Samarqand. His tribe lived by a modified form of pastoral nomadism, migrating by season from one area to another along routes that remained relatively fixed.² Crops, though never extensively cultivated, were often sown along these routes and then harvested later in the year when the tribe

returned. The nomads disdained settled populations, and their values stressed mobility, self-sufficiency, and physical and military prowess—qualities necessary for survival in their harsh environment.

In addition to Transoxiana the other key region that was to comprise Timur's empire was Iran. The most important part of this vast area for the Timurids was Khurasan, which includes the entire northeastern part of the Iranian plateau. Khurasan suffered greatly during the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century, and like Transoxiana its population had declined significantly during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Its major cities, however, were still centers of urban Islamic culture, and Herat was unquestionably the most important during the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Surrounded by a large oasis and shielded by a substantial mountain range, the city enjoyed the benefits of good irrigation and fertile pastures nearby.

To the west of Khurasan, separated by large stretches of barren land and desert, were the other rich provinces of Iran and the great cities Tabriz, Isfahan, and Shiraz—long centers of Persian civilization. These cities had long and varied histories, rich urban environments, and numerous poets, artists, and craftsmen; cultivated, refined, and settled, they represented the pinnacle of learning and sophistication in the eastern Islamic world.

It was across this dramatic landscape with its network of trade routes punctuated by strategically located cities that Timur's armies marched during the last quarter of the fourteenth century. In doing so, they followed almost the same path as the earlier Mongol conquests of the thirteenth century, led by Chingiz (or Genghis) Khan (r. 1206–27). Beginning with Chingiz Khan's first incursions into the Islamic world in 1219 and culminating with his grandson Hulagu's sack of Baghdad in 1258, the Mongols shocked and ravaged much of Central Asia, Iran, and Iraq, creating an empire that stretched from China to the Mediterranean sea—the largest land-based empire in history.

The Mongol successes, which set a standard for the Timurids, were made possible on the one hand by Chingiz Khan's charismatic leadership and on the other by the strength of the Mongol armies. Although Chingiz Khan respected traditional tribal units, he altered tribal structure by establishing an artificial system in which tribal loyalties were subordinated to

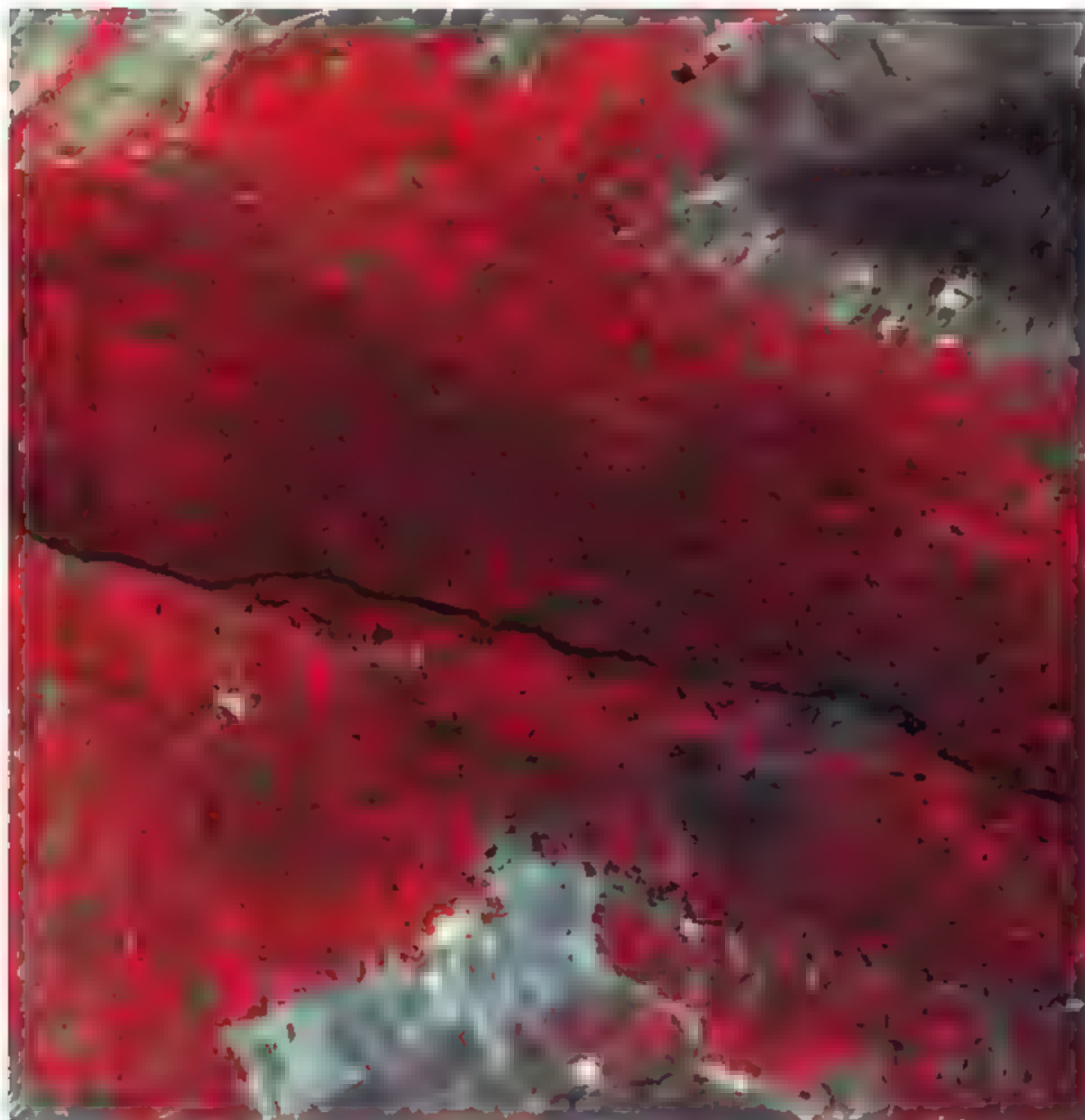


fig. 1

Infrared satellite view of Samarqand, Uzbekistan, USSR

newly created military units, presaging Timur's strategy of the late fourteenth century.⁴ Brilliant and rugged horsemen trained in the harsh environment of the steppe, the Mongol forces, which may have numbered seven or eight hundred thousand, were organized according to a decimal system with units ranging from ten to ten thousand.⁵ Through the systematic use of terror cities were frightened into subjugation; those that did not surrender were destroyed. Commerce and agriculture, especially in Transoxiana and Khurasan, were brought to a virtual halt, though they were already in

decline in some of these areas prior to the Mongol attacks.⁶ The Mongols' sack of Baghdad, the seat of the Abbasid caliphate and one of the foremost cities of Islam, left physical and psychological wounds that had a profound effect on Islamic society throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The Mongol legacy, however, was not only one of horror and devastation. Under Hulagu and his successors, known as the Il-Khanids, many of Iran's cities were rebuilt, and the urban traditions of scholarship and culture were continued and even advanced. They



Azerbaijan, Arab and Persian Iraq,
and Central Iran





cat. no. 2

Section of a Koran
Maragha, dated A.H. Shawwal 738
(A.H. April–May 1338)
ff. 18–20

patronized noted mathematicians like Nasiruddin Tusi (1201–74) and talented historians like Rashiduddin (c. 1247–1318). By commissioning mosques, *madrasas* (schools), and luxurious copies of the Koran (cat. no. 2), they quickly entrenched themselves in the urban Islamic culture of Iran. Although the Il-Khanids, like other Mongols, adhered to ancestral shamanism and Buddhism, they were religiously expedient and by the 1280s began converting to Islam, the dominant faith of the lands they ruled. The Mongols' religious opportunism is well reflected by the practices of the ruler Muhammad Khudabanda Uljaytu (r. 1304–17), who began his life by following shamanist and Buddhist



beliefs before converting to Christianity and then Islam, wavering at the end of his life between Sunni and Shiite practices."

The Mongols' military and cultural achievements established them as the most potent force in the pre-Timurid Islamic world. Their steppe-based empire was a constant inspiration for Timur, who consciously sought to be seen not only as Chingiz Khan's equal but as a figure of even greater power and magnificence. Timur's armies moved from one end to the other of his rapidly expanding empire with a ruthlessness and speed reminiscent of his predecessor's conquests.

After consolidating his power in Transoxiana over

a period of several decades, Timur held his coronation at Balkh on April 9, 1370. Until this time Timur's activities did not distinguish him from any number of other petty tribal rulers in the region striving for power. But with his defeat of his closest rival, the Mongol ruler Amir Husayn, grandson of Amir Qazaghan (d. 1370), and the successful negotiation of a series of strategic alliances with his remaining rivals, he was able to launch a series of military campaigns that transformed his career. Carefully planned and often extremely violent, these ventures included three—from 1386 to 1388, from 1392 to 1396, and again in 1399—that resulted in the subjugation of Iran.

During the final decades of the fourteenth century Timur's armies could be found throughout Asia; stone monuments marking his forces' presence have been discovered in Nuristan (now northeastern Afghanistan), Turkey, and Kazakhstan. The latter (fig. 2), carved in 1391 and written in Arabic and Turki (in Uighur script), celebrates his march against Toqtamish, a former ally and the leader of the Golden Horde (cat. no. 3), a Mongol *ulus* (nation) that was led by descendants of Chingiz Khan's eldest son, Jochi. The stone proclaims, "In the land of the seven hundred black Toqmaq in the year of the lamb, in the middle of the spring

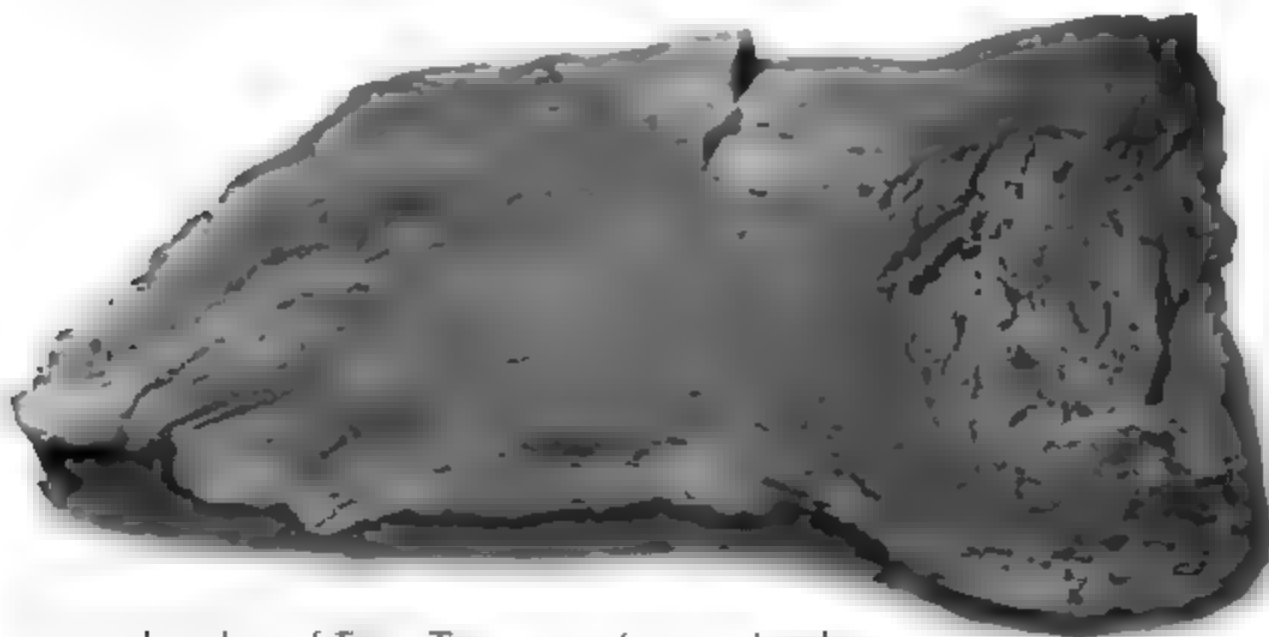


fig. 2

Stone commemorating Timur's march against Toqtamish in 1391
Leningrad, State Hermitage

moon the sultan of Turan Timur went [at a run] with two hundred thousand troops, of the name of his own family, against the blood of Khan Toqtamish. Having reached this place, he raised this stone so that it would be a sign. 'God will show justice! If it is the pleasure of God, God, show mercy to the people! Remember us and bless us!' "8 After a series of battles Timur finally subdued Toqtamish in 1395.

Two years later Timur's forces were thousands of miles east of the stone, as they moved south across the mountains of the Hindu Kush into India. They sacked Delhi in 1398 and returned home to Samarqand in 1399. A year later, in the autumn of 1400, Timur swept west into the Arab world and advanced against the Mamluks in Syria, taking Aleppo, Hama, Baalbek, and after a prolonged siege, Damascus, several of the most important centers of Muslim Arab culture. From Syria,

under the rule of the Mongol Yuan dynasty until 1368, when the Ming dynasty came to power. In the last two decades of the fourteenth century Timur and the Ming emperor warily exchanged gifts, and in letters each pointedly referred to the other as a vassal. With the accession of a new emperor in 1403 this relationship changed as the Ming ruler more aggressively sought to establish his position over Timur. Using this deterioration in relations as a pretext, Timur began preparations



Lat. 100.1

"A Battle between Timur and Toqtemish Khan in 1391," from a *Zafarnama* of Sharafuddin Ali Yaqsi, Shiraz, dated A.H. Dhu'l-Hijja 819 (A.D. June–July 1416)



where the Mongols had earlier been stopped, he moved north into Anatolia, where he defeated the Ottoman sultan Bayezid I at the battle of Ankara on July 28, 1402.⁹ With the capture of the Ottoman ruler, Timur had either destroyed or forced into submission every major power from Cairo to the borders of China, including the major dynasties in Iran: the Jalayirids, Karts, Muzaffarids, and Qaraqoyunlu.

At the time of his death in 1405 Timur was preparing to march on China, the last of the former Mongol dominions not under his control. China had been

for a major campaign; elaborate plans were made for a prolonged stay away from Samarqand, his capital. The imperial forces were already camped at Utrar, 250 miles to the north of the city, when Timur suddenly died.

The success of Timur's campaigns and his ability to maintain control over the disparate lands of his empire was due in large part to his systematic use of terror. The most notorious of his atrocities was the massing of his victims' skulls into huge columns, often containing several thousand heads, outside the gates of cities that he chose to punish. In other instances he had the bodies

of living prisoners thrown on top of each other and then encased in clay and fragments of brick.¹⁰ Quick to respond to potential threats and aware of the power of intimidation, Timur did not hesitate to murder the inhabitants—men, women, and children—of cities that had either resisted his army or rebelled against him. Only the elderly, artists and craftsmen, children under five, and members of religious classes were, on occasion, spared. Those who did survive his attacks were sold as slaves and sent back to Transoxiana.¹¹ These were not random activities but part of a calculated program of conquest through fear. By projecting an image of ruthlessness, Timur forced numerous cities to pay him huge sums of money in return for sparing them.

The stability of Timur's empire, like the earlier Mongol ones, was not maintained solely by force. Timur and his descendants were able to manipulate the complex social, political, and cultural traditions of their Turco-Mongol heritage to provide an aura of legitimacy for their rule. One of the methods for accomplishing this was stressing the connections between their dynasty and the dynasty of Chingiz Khan. Such a link was essential, as it was believed in fourteenth-century Central Asia and Iran that only descendants of Chingiz Khan could attain sovereign power.

Timur was a member of the Barlas tribe, one of the many groups that made up the Chaghatay ulus, named after Chingiz Khan's second son. The origins of the Barlas are Turkic, but their exact lineage is uncertain. Timur and other tribe members claimed that they shared a common ancestor with Chingiz Khan. Despite the confusion surrounding the Timurids' early history, fifteenth-century Timurid texts stress that the Barlas tribe had been assigned to Chaghatay's retinue before Chingiz Khan's death in 1227¹² and that they had long been associated with military leadership under the Mongols.¹³

During the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries severe political and religious divisions split the khanate that had been ruled by Chaghatay into two parts: Mughulistan and Transoxiana. Mughulistan on the River Ili, now in northern Soviet Central Asia, was ruled by Mongols who for the most part avoided conversion to Islam and upheld their traditional steppe customs, including shamanistic practices and strong tribal affiliations. Transoxiana, however, was controlled by Mongols who had intermarried with Turkic

tribes like the Barlas and adopted Turkic affiliations and practices; many of these Mongols had converted to Islam. By the middle of the fourteenth century new intermingled groups replaced the Chaghatayids as the rulers of the region, though they were careful always to govern in the name of a Mongol khan. This measure helped to establish the legitimacy of their rule through affirmation of their Chingizid past.

When Timur came to power, he continued such traditional Chingizid practices. He issued his orders and had the *khutba* (official address) read on Fridays in mosques in the name of a descendant of Chingiz Khan. He governed in strict adherence to Chingiz Khan's code of law, the *yasa*, a shrewd political maneuver since Transoxiana was still a bastion of Chingizid tradition, despite growing interest in Islam.

Timur further affirmed his relationship to Chingiz Khan and the Mongols by adopting the Mongol title *kutigan* (son-in-law), after his marriage in 1370 to Saray Malik Khanim, a daughter of the Chaghatayid khan Qazan, who had ruled until 1346.¹⁴ To strengthen this connection, Timur also married his sons Umar-Shaykh (d. 1394), Miranshah (d. 1408), and Shahrukh (1377–1447) as well as his grandsons Muhammad-Sultan (1375–1403) and Ulugh-Beg (1394–1449) to Chingizid noble women.¹⁵ By stressing his relationship to the descendants of the Mongol rulers, Timur presented himself as the legitimate reviver of the House of Chingiz Khan and thus the leader of a reinvigorated Chingizid kingship.¹⁶

The importance of establishing the legitimacy of both Timur's descent and rule is confirmed in an inscription on the jade tombstone (fig. 3) placed over his grave at the Gur-i Amir by Ulugh-Beg sometime after 1425.¹⁷ This inscription traces Timur's ancestry to Alanqoa, a mythical Mongol queen whose progeny allegedly include Chingiz Khan and his offspring. Her descendants were said to be illuminated by a divine light.¹⁸ In the dynastic Mongol history *Secret History of the Mongols* Alanqoa describes the conception of three of her children: "Every night a bright yellow man entered by the light of the hole at the top or [by that] of the door top of the tent and rubbed my belly. His light was wont to sink into my belly. When he went out, like a yellow dog he was wont to crawl out by the beams of the sun or moon. They [the children] are sons of Heaven."¹⁹



fig. 1

Tombstone over the grave of Timur at the Gur-i Amir Samarkand, after 1411
jade nephrite

Ulugh-Beg's inscription creates for Timur a shared ancestor with Chingiz Khan, one that establishes the warlord as one of the great queen's "sons":

And no father was known to this glorious [ancestor], but his mother [was] Alanquva. It is said that her character was righteous and chaste, and that she was not an adulteress. She conceived her son through a light which came into her from the upper part of a door and it assumed for her the likeness of a perfect man. And it [the light] said that it was one of the sons of the Commander of the Faithful, Ali son of Abu Talib.²⁰

By being declared a descendant of Alanqoa and Ali (the prophet Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law), Timur was placed in the unique position of being connected with the two most powerful dynastic lines in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Iran and Central Asia.²¹ The inscription further strengthened Timur's genealogy by its association of Alanqoa with the Virgin Mary, implicitly identifying her supernatural consort ("who assumed the likeness of a perfect man") with the Abrahamic Holy Spirit (Koran 19:17).

This strange juxtaposition of lineages reflects the position of Timur's tribe. The Barlas inhabited the Qashqa Darya valley in Transoxiana, where culture in the fourteenth century was not only influenced by traditional Turco-Mongol practices but by Islam. Although Timur could not read or write, he spoke two languages: Turki (also called Chaghatay), the eastern Turkic language spoken by Mongols and Turks in Transoxiana, and Persian, the language of Iran.

In this heterodox frontier milieu distinctions between Shiism, which had attracted some Mongols from an early date, and more orthodox Sunni versions of Islam were moot. Among Timur's followers and subjects there was a growing belief in an indigenous form of Islam. Sufis and other religious groups—the primary agents of conversion to the religion in this region—were extremely active, often mingling folk traditions and magical beliefs with Islamic teaching.²² Timur's father, Amir Taraghai, was a leading member of the Barlas tribe, and his spiritual adviser was the Sufi shaykh Shamsuddin Kulal.²³ Timur, who was attached to Shamsuddin during his childhood, continued his father's cultivation of holy men and is even buried at

the feet of his own spiritual adviser, Mir Sayyid Baraka.

Timur's interest in Islam can be seen in his commissioning a number of mosques, madrasas, and other religious buildings, but the most obvious expression of his fascination with mystics and holy men is his extensive patronage of the Shrine of Ahmad Yasavi, a much-venerated twelfth-century shaykh buried at Yasi (modern Turkestan), a city north of Tashkent. After making a pilgrimage to the shaykh's tomb in the winter of 1397, Timur ordered the construction of a monumental new structure with massive outer walls, an imposing entrance facade, and a soaring central dome. Among the many objects that he commissioned for the shrine is a mammoth bronze basin (fig. 4) and

six massive oil lamps (cat. nos. 4, 5A–C). With their strong but simple forms and impressive scale these pieces powerfully affirmed Timur's allegiance with the popular piety represented by the shaykh. The Arabic inscription on the basin further develops this intent by setting Timur's largess within the context of a pious act: "The most glorious Amir, the Master of the necks of nations, the one under the special care of the King, the Merciful, Amir Timur Gurgan, may he be exalted, . . . ordered the construction of this vessel for drinking on account of the mausoleum of the Shaykh al-Islam, Sultan of Shaykhs in the world, Shaykh Ahmad Yasavi, may God sanctify his dear soul, in the 20th of Shawwal [in the] year 801 [25 June 1399]."⁴⁴



Fig. 4
Basin commissioned by Timur for the
Shrine of Ahmad Yasavi
Central Asia, c. 1399
Bronze
1399, 20th of Shawwal
Leningrad, State Hermitage, SA-15910

Amir Taraghay's and Timur's association with Sufi leaders established a precedent between the rulers of the dynasty and holy men that was to continue throughout the fifteenth century. Timur's attitude toward Islam, however, was ambiguous at best: at times he adhered to conflicting codes of law—the Islamic *shari'a* (religious law) and the *yasa*—a tendency that continued throughout the fifteenth century among Timurid princes. Moreover he violated some Islamic shrines just as he patronized others. After the fall of Damascus, for example, his followers drank wine, gambled, and eventually set fire to the city's renowned mosque.⁴⁵

According to the historian Ibn Arabshah, whose chronicle of Timur's life is often scathing, Timur was an unjust man who disregarded the laws of Islam and constantly engaged in depraved acts:

He [Timur] rooted out all men among Arabs and
barbarians,
He destroyed right custom and went forth wicked
with insolent swords that moved hither and thither.
He destroyed kings and all the noble and learned,
And strove to put out the light of Allah and the
pure Faith,
With the tenets of Jenghizkhan, that wicked tyrant
and unbeliever,
He permitted the shedding of blood of all the
constant and grateful,
He made it a free right to take captive chaste
believers from the harem;
He threw children upon the fire as if burning
incense,
He added to fornication the drinking of wine.⁴⁶



cat. no. 5A

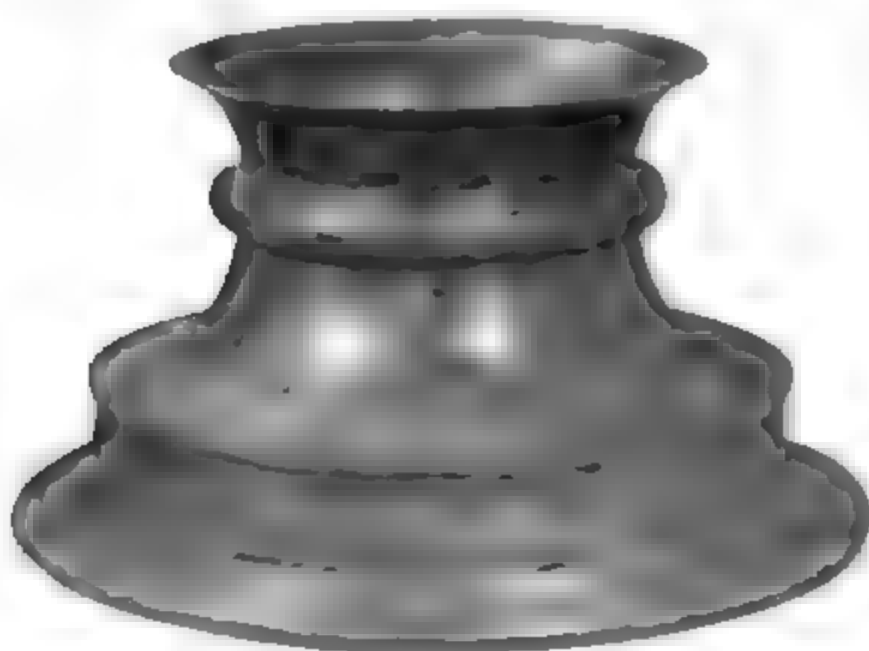
Reservoir of an oil lamp
Central Asia, c. 1397

cat. no. 5B

Middle section of an oil lamp
Central Asia, c. 1397

When expedient, though, Timur did not hesitate to present himself as the champion of Islam. He undertook many military campaigns, for instance, under the guise of preserving religious order and upholding the *shari'a*.⁴⁷ Timur took advantage of Islam's popular appeal to create a stable economic environment in which the merchant classes could flourish,⁴⁸ but he was by no means committed to all of Islam's tenets.

Underlying Timur's use of Islamic and Mongol culture to legitimate his rule, however, is a more important factor: Timur was an extremely gifted leader, and his abilities—both real and imagined—inspired a loyal following based on his actual talents, his physical prowess and intellect, as well as the mythical image that he consciously developed.



cat. no. 5C

Base of an oil lamp
Central Asia, c. 1397

cat. no. 4 (opposite)

Oil lamp
Central Asia, c. 1397



Ibn Arabshah noted that Timur was a physically impressive man: "Tall in stature, big in brow and head . . . white in color, mixed with red, but not dark, stout of limb with broad shoulders, thick fingers, long legs, perfect build, long beard, dry hands, lame on the side, with eyes like candles, without brilliance, powerful in voice."¹⁰ He was renowned for his horsemanship, military tactics, cunning, and ruthlessness.

Perhaps Timur's greatest strength, however, lay in his ability to control and shape the complex tribal affiliations that governed life on the steppe. Power in Transoxiana could only be gained by forging allegiances among tribes. These were difficult to create as each tribe wished to maintain its autonomy.¹⁰ Only leaders like Chingiz Khan and Timur—with tremendous personal charisma and political skills—could overcome the centrifugal nature of the tribes.

Timur transformed the loosely knit and inherently unstable tribal confederations of the Chaghatay ulus into a nontribal army of conquest. He shifted the center of power in the ulus from the ruling families of the tribes to people who owed their positions to his favor. In doing so, he separated tribal politics from the attainment of power in the ulus, thus creating a new supratribal core of loyal followers.¹¹ At the center of this new structure were Timur's sons and grandsons, who were appointed as governors of conquered provinces, and the amirs, who were charged with helping them. Order was further maintained by conscripting local forces into Timur's armies. By compelling the princes' and conquered rulers' retinues to accompany him on his campaigns, Timur kept the dynasty's elite constantly occupied. Thus the princes and other local rulers were unable to assert their power, as their troops were almost always engaged in maneuvers outside their provinces.¹²

Unlike Europe and elsewhere in the Muslim world, the political dynamics of the steppe provided no clearly defined codes concerning the preservation of such supratribal politics.¹³ This problem became acute at the time of succession. Any member of the ruler's family, from his siblings and children to his uncles and nephews, was a potential successor. Without any broadly accepted mechanisms for controlling this process civil disturbances were almost unavoidable as the struggle for succession usually turned to murder (frequently fratricidal) and warfare.¹⁴ Although Timur

nominated his grandson Pir-Muhammad ibn Jahangir (1376–1407) to succeed him,¹⁵ he was unable to transfer to his heir the political bonds and loyalties that he had created for himself. The turmoil caused by successions plagued the Timurids long after the great warlord's death, gradually eroding their power; toward the end of the fifteenth century only Khurasan and part of Transoxiana remained in their control.

Unlike Timur's political and military accomplishments, the cultural framework he established to promote his image continued to function throughout the fifteenth century. Despite the continual diminution of the dynasty's power, the Timurids were able to project an ever greater aura of cultural prestige. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, when they were rulers in name only, they were perceived throughout the Islamic world as models of urbane sophistication. The process by which the Timurids were able to become such an unparalleled cultural force was initiated by Timur.

The warlord consciously used ritual and culture to make himself appear larger than life, cloaking an aura of power. The success of this policy depended on three elements: the aggrandizement of Timur and his achievements; the incorporation of past literary and visual traditions into the dynasty's aesthetic vocabulary; and the effort to form and codify a system of images that could be applied en masse to artistic production.

A series of wall paintings in several of Timur's garden palaces exemplify the imperial image he endeavored to establish. Although the paintings no longer exist, Ibn Arabshah wrote that they depicted

[Timur's] assemblies and his own likeness, now smiling, now austere, and representations of his battles and sieges and his conversation with kings, amirs, lords, wise men, magnates, and sultans offering homage to him and bringing gifts to him from every side and his hunting-nets and ambushes and battles in India, Dasht, and Persia and how he gained victory and how his enemy was scattered and driven to flight; and the likeness of his sons and grandsons, amirs and soldiers and his public feasts and the goblets of wine and cup-bearers and the zither-players of his mirth . . . and many other things which happened in his realms during his life which were

shown in series . . . and therein he intended, that those who knew not his affairs, should see them as though present.³⁶

In short these paintings portrayed Timur's world as he wished it to be seen: contrived and ordered with him at the center of his victorious armies, surrounded by his family, and receiving the submission of all who came into contact with him.

Through the use of carefully constructed ceremonial spaces, complex rituals, and strict codes of behavior as well as the commissioning of elaborate buildings and objects, Timur sought to define himself as a ruler of unparalleled power and prestige. This image was well articulated in the extensive ceremonies of his court. The Spaniard Ruy Gonzales de Clavijo, who led an embassy on behalf of Henry III of Castile to Samarqand in 1403, left a vivid, at times awestruck, account of the ceremonies at Timur's court.³⁷ Rigid codes of conduct shaped the etiquette of these gatherings and guided the participants in their movements. The need to adhere to the formal requirements of these events was so important that participants frequently had to be manhandled.

For example, after entering a garden for one affair, Clavijo and his companions were grasped under their arms by Timur's attendants and held that way to ensure that they performed the appropriate actions. According to the Spanish ambassador:

They brought us all forward till we came to where a certain great lord of the court, a very old man, was seated on a raised dais, he being the nephew of Timur, the son of his sister, and we all made him our obeisances. Then passing on we came before another dais where we found several young princes, the grandsons of his Highness, to whom we likewise paid our respects, and at this point they demanded of us the letter which we were bringing from our lord the King of Spain to Timur. . . . Then coming to the presence beyond, we found Timur and he was seated under what might be called a portal, which same was before the entrance of a most beautiful palace that appeared in the background. He was sitting on the ground, but upon a raised dais before which there was a fountain that threw up a column of water into the air backwards, and in the basin of the fountain there were floating red apples.³⁸

Upon seeing the great ruler, surrounded by his closest courtiers, servants forced the Spaniards to bow and put their right knees to the ground, their arms crossed over their breasts. They were then commanded to advance a step and repeat this performance. After a third bow they were left kneeling on the ground until Timur signaled that they should rise and advance toward him, at which point the attendants let go of their arms. All of these gestures compelled the visitors to show their respect for the ruler and impressed upon them a sense of Timur's omnipresent power and munificence.

At each of these events zones of access were established to ensure that Timur was both securely protected and the focus of attention. Often various objects were used to create intricate arrangements that emphasized these zones and reinforced the emperor's aura of power. At one feast, for instance, in the field between the tents and Timur's pavilion huge jars of wine were placed at regular intervals establishing a barrier between the ruler and his courtiers through which no one was allowed to pass.³⁹

The contrived and artificial nature of these events is evident in later paintings, in which the festivities are transformed into colorful ballets of formal gestures and subtle movements. These works (cat. nos. 21, 32, 147, ill. pp. 110–11, 108, 264–65) reveal how court ceremonies became theatrical events that were intended to display the grandeur of the dynasty: in the paintings handsomely attired courtiers, dutiful attendants, richly decorated textiles, elaborate jewels, and finely worked gold and silver vessels establish an effect of imperial sumptuousness.

Often the events discussed by Ibn Arabshah, Clavijo, and others and depicted in fifteenth-century paintings are little more than pageants or parades that provide the participants with an opportunity to reaffirm the dynasty's new-found brilliance and power. Clavijo describes one reception in which Timur's principal wife (presumably Saray Malik Khanım) appeared in flowing robes with a train held by fifteen ladies-in-waiting; her face was covered with white lead or some other cosmetic, "to make it look as if she were wearing a paper mask."⁴⁰ She wore a thin white veil and an elaborate headdress made of red cloth and decorated with precious stones and gold embroidery.⁴¹ As she moved, the headdress swayed and had to be supported by attendants who walked on either side of her.

A white silk, domed-shaped parasol was held above her head to keep the sun off her face. When she entered Timur's tent she was seated on a low dais next to, but behind, the emperor. After her arrival seven more of Timur's wives appeared, each similarly dressed and each allocated a dais at ever-increasing distances from him, depending upon their importance.⁴³

14 These ceremonies were usually held in *baghs* (gardens) outside the city (in contrast to the practice of earlier Persian rulers who used gardens primarily as private retreats). The Bagh-i Dilgusha (Enchanting Garden), the Bagh-i Chanar (Plane Tree Garden), the Bagh-i Naw (New Garden), and others were enclosed by walls and elaborate gates and planted with fruit trees. Although Timur built large palaces in his gardens, the celebrations generally took place inside elaborate tents, none of which has survived. The tents appear to have provided a highly artificial and opulent backdrop for events, and several are described by Clavijo and Ibn Arabshah among others.

One tent, a large square edifice, measured three long lances in height and one hundred paces from angle to angle. Its exterior walls were of silk woven in bands of white, black, and yellow. Clavijo wrote:

The ceiling of the pavilion was made circular to form a dome, and the poles supporting it were twelve in number each as thick round as the chest of a man breast-high. These poles were painted in colours blue and gold and otherwise, and of these twelve great tent poles four were placed at the corners with two others in between on the side . . . Round outside the four walls of the main tent of the pavilion there are low galleries like porticoes, and these likewise form a square, and above they join onto the tent wall of the pavilion.⁴⁴

According to Clavijo this tent resembled a castle, an impression reinforced by the battlements and multi-colored cloth wall that surrounded the building.⁴⁵

Similar tents, though of different shapes, were located throughout the garden, some held together by guy wires, others by internal scaffolding. The theatricality of these structures is clearly evident in Ibn Arabshah's description:

And in that plain they had pitched for him many tents of different sort of which one had the upper and lower border woven in gold and was adorned within and without with the finest feathers . . . and another was decked with gems of various sort, which, set in broad curtains brodered with gold dazzled the eye. In the midst also they set roofs of silver and stairs to ascend and doors for their houses and couches, on which they might recline. . . . They also showed rare treasures and hung there curtains of marvelous beauty and among them a curtain of cloth, taken from the treasury of Sultan Abu Yazid [Bayezid I], of which each part was about ten cubits of the new measure in breadth, decorated with various pictures of herbs, buildings, and leaves, also of reptiles, and with figures of birds, wild beasts and forms of old men, young men, women and children and painted inscriptions and rarities of distant countries and joyous instruments of music and rare animals exactly portrayed with different hues, of perfect beauty with limbs firmly joined.⁴⁶

Elaborate and imaginative, these enclosures with their bright colors and fanciful designs provided the background for many of the rituals at the Timurid court.

Timur's decision to celebrate his ceremonies in gardens and semipermanent tents may reflect an effort to convey his imperial claims within the pastoral traditions of the Barlas.⁴⁷ At the same time, however, he had embarked upon an extensive building campaign in Samarqand. By participating actively in the culture of the settled populations of his territories, Timur further marked his presence on the physical environment of his world and thus glorified his image. Among the many monuments that he constructed there are a *masjid-i jami'*, or Friday mosque, popularly called the Mosque of Bibi Khanim; the Gur-i Amir; an enormous bazaar, no longer extant;⁴⁸ and a now-destroyed citadel, the Kōk Saray (Blue Palace).⁴⁹

fig. 1

Entrance portal and minaret of the
masjid-i jami' of Timur
Samarqand, c. 1390-1405





fig. 7 (opposite)

Dome of the Gur-i Amir
Samarqand, c. 1400–1404

fig. 6

Flanking walls of the sanctuary of the
mausoleum of Timur detail
Samarqand, c. 1398–1405

Though now partially destroyed, the great Friday mosque (figs. 5–6), begun by Timur on May 20, 1399, had colossal proportions, with a massive entrance portal and an inner courtyard 197 feet by 295 feet.⁴⁹ Made of baked brick with stone columns and covered with multicolored glazed bricks and tiles, the mosque could be seen from afar; one chronicle claims that the Koranic inscription over the portal could be read from two miles away.⁵⁰ According to Clavijs, Timur was actively involved in its construction and was particularly concerned about its size:

No sooner had it been completed than he [Timur] began to find fault with its entrance gateway, which he said was much too low and must forthwith be pulled down. Then the workmen began to dig pits to lay the new foundations, when in order that the piers might be rapidly rebuilt his Highness gave out that he himself would take charge to direct the labour for the one pier of the new gateway while he laid it on two of the lords of his court, his special favourites, to see to the foundations on the other part. . . . Now at this season Timur was already weak in health, he could no longer stand for long on his feet, or mount his horse, having always to be carried in a litter. It was therefore in his litter that every morning he had himself brought to the place, and he would stay there the best part of the day urging on the work.⁵¹

Within this context it is tempting to associate a gigantic Koran (cat. no. 6A–C), often attributed to Timur's grandson Baysunghur, with the great warlord's patronage of this mosque.⁵² The manuscript fits perfectly on a large, carved stone Koran stand (fig. 26, ill. p. 85), which originally was located in the main chamber of the mosque and was commissioned by Ulugh-Beg after Timur's death.

The Gur-i Amir (fig. 7) is a similarly majestic structure. Timur built this tomb in 1404 on the site of the madrasa and *khanagah* (monastery) of his grandson Muhammad-Sultan, whom he had selected as heir apparent. Although Timur was later buried there, it is not known whether he intended for this mausoleum to serve as a dynastic complex; he had already built a monumental tomb for his oldest son, Jahangir, at Shahr-i Sabz (Kish) for this purpose. The Gur-i Amir, however, clearly signaled the growing importance of Samarqand as the center of the empire. Its elongated drum is capped by a ribbed double dome, sheathed in turquoise glazed tiles. Octagonal-shaped with a large projecting portal, the mausoleum has an equally striking interior. The inner surfaces of the sepulcher explode in dazzling patterns of red, blue, and shimmering gold and are richly decorated with onyx tiles that include inscriptions in gold-painted, carved jasper; the ceiling's intricate geometric and floral designs are made of pressed and molded paper painted blue and gold.



أَوْثَانًا مَوْذُونًا يَنْتَكِرُونَ فِي الْخِيَمَةِ الَّذِينَ يَلْمِزُونَ الْمُطَّهَّرِينَ
 بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ
 قُلْ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُكُمْ أَنْ يُكَفِّرَ بَعْدِيَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُغْفِرُ
 لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْكُمْ وَأَخَذْتُ الرَّسُولَ بَاسْمِهِ أَفَإِنْ يَأْمُرُكُمْ
 أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ الَّتِي جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتٍ أَنْ تَبْلُغُوا
 إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى تَقُولُونَ إِنَّا لَنَجْعَلُ لَكُمْ فِيهَا آيَةً إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
 صَادِقِينَ قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأَطِيعُوا
 أَرْوَاحَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ إِنَّكُمْ تُنَازَعُونَ فِي الْأُمُورِ الَّتِي هِيَ

cat. no. 64

Folio from a Koran (para 29: 25-27)
Central Asia(?), c. 1400-1425

مَنْ يُؤَيِّنْكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمْ رِجْزَ الْغُلَامِ الَّذِينَ
 كَفَرُوا فَهُمْ أَعْيُنُكُمْ وَأَنْفُسُكُمْ فَهُمْ مِنْ آلِ يُثُومٍ الَّذِينَ
 ظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمُ اتَّخَذُوا اللَّهَ مَعْلُومًا وَأَنَّهُمْ يُفَتَّنُونَ
 أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ أَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ الْبَاقِعُونَ الْيَوْمَ نَذِيرًا
 أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا فِي أَعْيُنِنَا قَدْ كُنَّا خَائِفِينَ عَلَى مَا يَفْعَلُونَ
 بِالْعَالَمِينَ أَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ الْبَاقِعُونَ الْيَوْمَ نَذِيرًا أَنَّهُمْ
 كَانُوا فِي أَعْيُنِنَا قَدْ كُنَّا خَائِفِينَ عَلَى مَا يَفْعَلُونَ
 بِالْعَالَمِينَ أَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ الْبَاقِعُونَ الْيَوْمَ نَذِيرًا أَنَّهُمْ

cat. no. 65

Folio from a Koran (para 45: 9-13)
Central Asia(?), c. 1400-1425

cat. no. 66

Folio from a Koran (para 45: 13-16)
Central Asia(?), c. 1400-1425

وَمَا اخَذْنَا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ اَوْلِيَاءَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
عَظِيمٌ هَٰذَا هُدًى وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالآيَاتِ
رَبِّهِمْ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مِنْ جَحِيمٍ اِنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي يَخْرِجُ
لَكُمْ الْبَحْرَ لِيَخْرُجَ الْفُلُكُ فِيهِ بِأَمْرٍ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا
مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ وَيَخْرِجُكُمْ
مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مِنْهُ
اِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ قُلْ لِلَّهِ



fig. 8

Shah-i-Zinda funerary complex
Samarkand, c. 1170–1429

cat. no. 78

Frieze with a Khoranic inscription from
the tomb of Buwayh Qutub Khan
Bukhara, c. 1458–59
Glazed ceramic



Timur also encouraged various members of his family, especially his wives, to add to the city's monuments. Saray Malik Khanim, for instance, built a madrasa opposite the Friday mosque. Another wife, Tūmān Agha, constructed a khanaqah in the Shah-i Zinda,¹³ a large funerary complex that underwent a major expansion during the second half of the fourteenth century (fig. 8). Many of Timur's wives and sisters, among others, built colorful tile-sheathed tombs there.¹⁴ It was laid out as a funerary promenade with mausolea on both sides of an axial passageway, structured around the supposed tomb of Qutham ibn Abbas, a cousin of the prophet Muhammad. The glazed-tile facades of these tombs provide a summation of early Timurid architectural design (fig. 9), which developed from late fourteenth-century Central Asian and Iranian experiments (cat. no. 7A–B).

The Shah-i Zinda is also an important example of how Timur encouraged patronage of folk Islam as well as more official Islamic institutions. In contrast with traditional expressions of homage to Islam, such as the construction of the Friday mosque, the shrine was strongly linked with more populist expressions of piety; it had been a center of Islamic cult activities since the eleventh century. Its allure in Timur's time

cat. no. 7A

Column and capital from the tomb of
Buyan Quli Khan
Bukhara, c. 1358–59
Glazed ceramic



fig. 9

Exterior revetment of the tomb of
Shad-i Malik Agha at Shah-i Zinda
(detail)
Samarkand, 1372

derived partly from a legend that Qutham had been led there by the prophet Khizr and had descended into a well, where he continued to live in splendor long after he was believed to have died. (This story, allegedly discovered by one of Timur's amirs, may explain how the Shah-i Zinda acquired its name, which means the "living king.")

42

The development of Samarqand as a major urban center with its strategically located and visually arresting monuments signaled Timur's desire to establish a permanent, physical center for his rapidly expanding empire; this was a dramatic departure from the semi-nomadic traditions of his ancestors. In naming the suburbs of his capital after the great cities of Islam—Damascus, Baghdad, Sultaniyya, Shiraz, Cairo⁵⁵—he created in Samarqand a microcosm of the world he wished to rule. Like the ceremonies in his gardens, the city itself became an elaborate stage upon which he articulated his vision of kingship: powerful, centralized, and urbane.

Timur also enacted his architectural vision outside Samarqand. Although now in ruins, the Aq Saray palace, built by Timur at Shahr-i Sabz in 1379–96, must have been an impressive structure (fig. 10).⁵⁶ The large

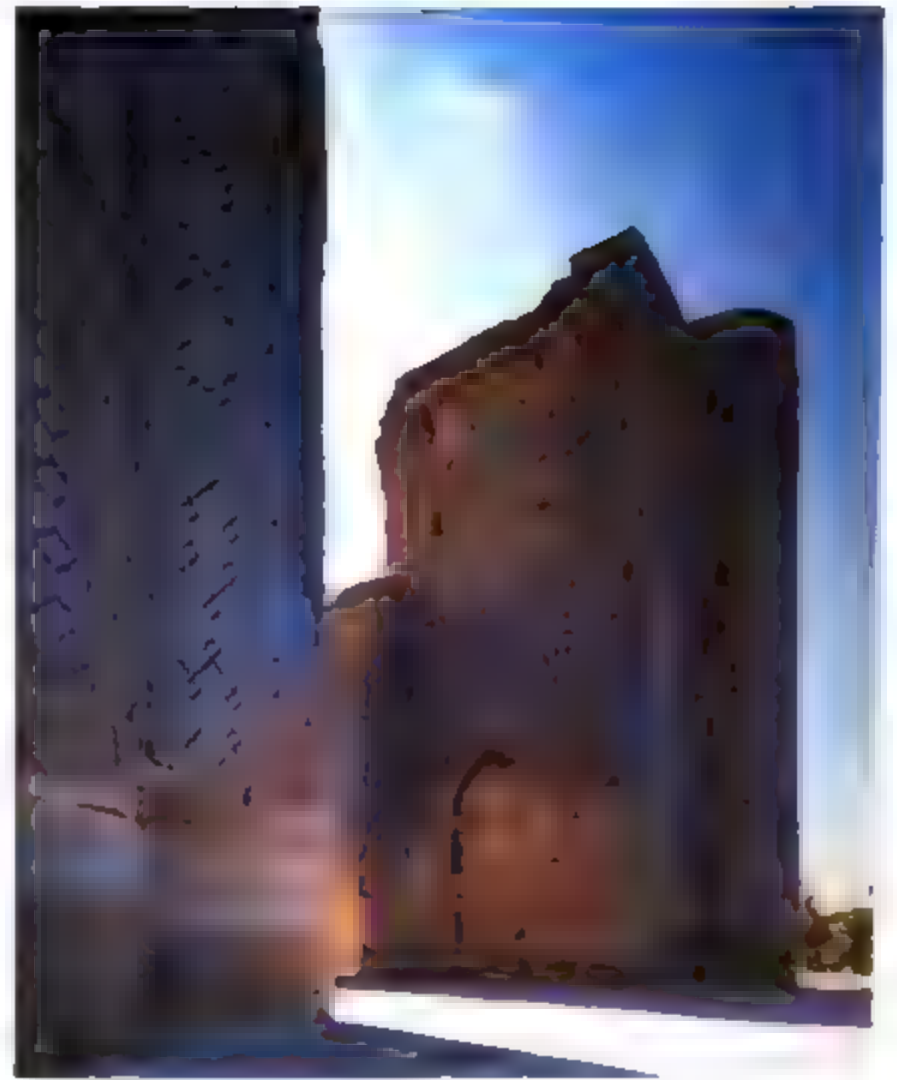


fig. 10

Ruins of the entrance portal of the
Aq Saray
Shahr-i Sabz, c. 1379–96

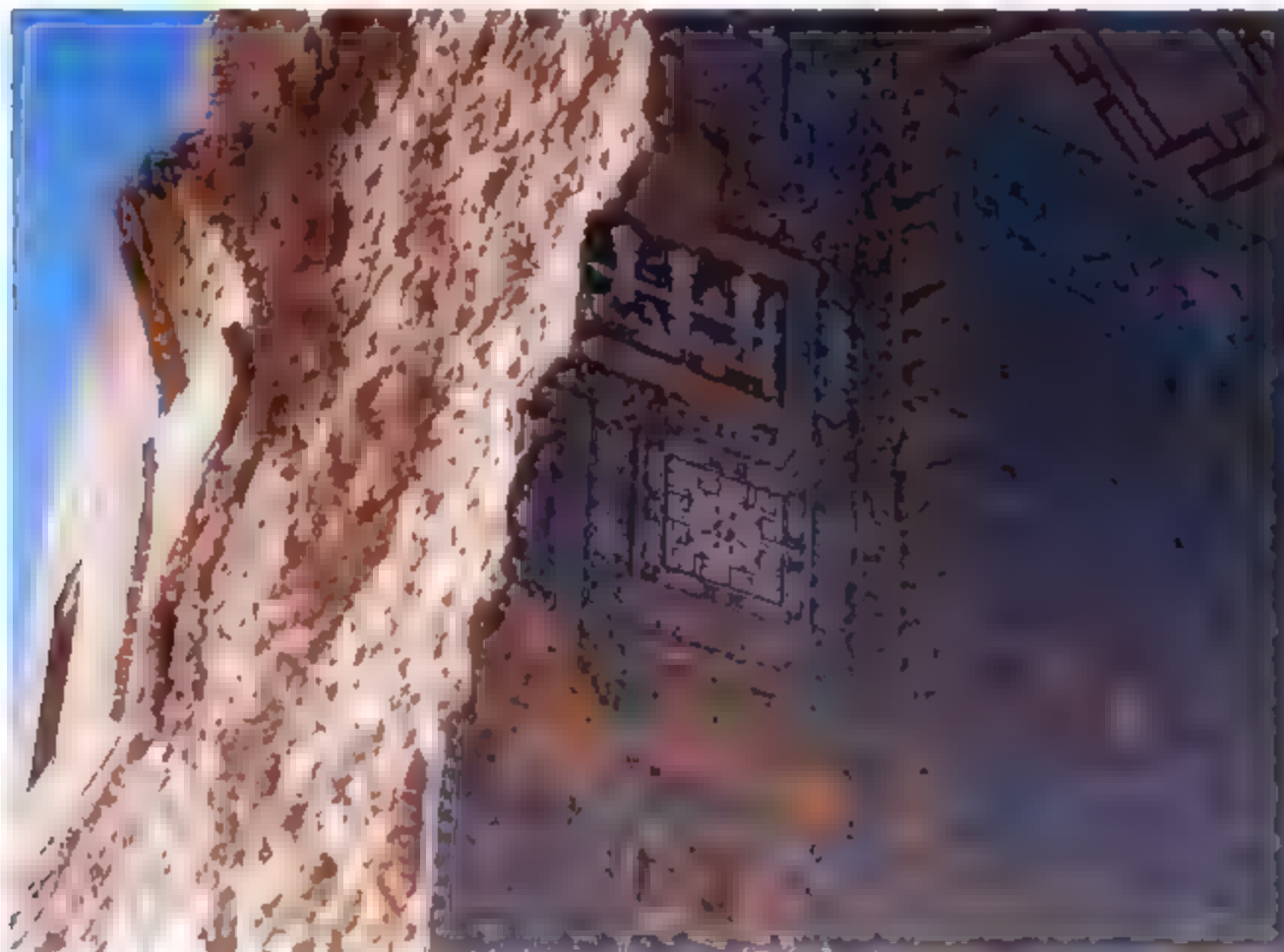


fig. 11

Entrance portal of the Aq Saray (detail)
Shahr-i Sabz, c. 1379–96

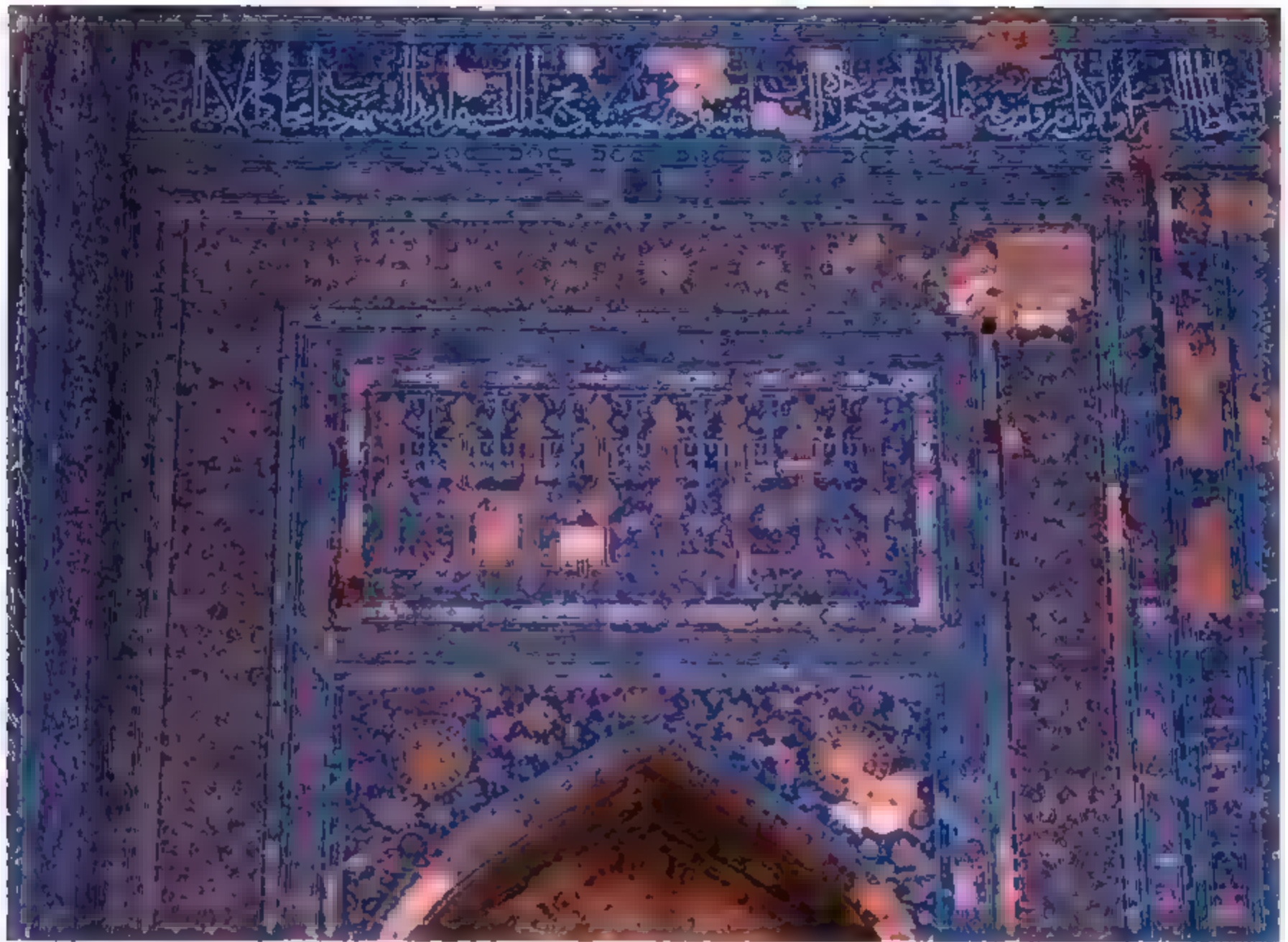


fig. 11
Entrance portal of the Aq Saray (detail)
Shahzadeh, c. 1479–96

portal that remains (fig. 11) is more than 70 feet wide and originally rose more than 160 feet. According to Clavijo, the palace had an inner courtyard three hundred paces wide, and in the spandrels of the entranceway's arches were images of a lion and the sun.⁵⁷ While much of the facade's decoration is now destroyed, the remaining glazed tile panels and inscriptions (fig. 12) give a sense of how richly adorned this building must have been. Dazzling combinations of geometric and vegetal designs and massive inscriptions cover the structure's walls and make it impossible to perceive the facade as a single entity.

The Shrine of Ahmad Yasavi, built by Timur in 1397, creates a similar effect. A large rectangle—220 by 156 feet—covered with turquoise-, blue-, and black-glazed bricks, the building stands alone, visible in all directions for miles (figs. 13–14).⁵⁸ Timur personally determined the exact size of the tomb's towering central dome, which rises 126 feet. Through the use of an innovative

system of transverse arches, combined with more traditional Central Asian vaults, the builders were able to span large spaces in a new and dramatic manner.

Through their scale and dominant position within the landscape, these monuments acted as unforgettable symbols of Timur's presence. Their massive forms and opulent decoration signaled the ruler's power and ambitions, compelling viewers to readjust their perceptions of the dynasty. The crucial role played by architecture was noted by the great Timurid poet and patron Mir Ali-Sher Nawa'i at the end of the fifteenth century: "Whoever builds a structure that is destined [to remain], when [his] name is inscribed therein, / For as long as the structure lasts, that name will be on the lips of people."⁵⁹ This notion of projecting a ruler's permanent presence through enduring monuments was central to Timur's architectural motivations.

Through the creation of a variety of objects—books, decorative works, metalware, woodwork—Timur's image was further developed and amplified. The mechanism that gave this process both its potency and durability was the incorporation of the literary and visual traditions of countries that Timur conquered into the dynasty's aesthetic vocabulary.



Timur's own artistic interests (as determined from the objects that have survived) were typically nouveau riche, ostentatious and obvious, especially when compared with the refined sensibility of many of his descendants. The basin and six oil lamps (cat. nos. 4, 5A-C) from the Shrine of Ahmad Yasavi⁶⁰ may best reflect the ruler's taste. Large yet simple, each piece is composed of strong lines and a well-articulated surface that clearly delineate the shape. Decoration, kept to a minimum, emphasizes the remarkable scale of the objects: the basin is more than five feet tall and six feet in diameter, while the oil lamps range in height from thirty-three inches to almost five feet. What decoration there is consists primarily of inscriptions (cast on the basin, inlaid in gold and silver on the oil lamps) bearing Timur's titles, such as "Of what was made on the order of the excellency, the great, the master of the learned, the just, Qutb al-Dunya wa'l-Din [axis of the world and religion], Amir Timur Gurgan, may [God] perpetuate his sovereignty."⁶¹ There is nothing subtle about these objects. They are brash statements of power.

A story told by Qazi Ahmad, a sixteenth-century artist and biographer, reflects the extent to which Timur's interests were guided by this uncultivated taste. According to Qazi Ahmad, the calligrapher Umar al-Aqta' copied in the demanding *ghubar* (dust) script a Koran that was so small that it fit under the socket of a signet ring, a remarkable technical feat. When he presented the manuscript written in microscopic characters to Timur, however, the ruler

did not approve of it or accept it and did not deign to favor him. Omar Aqta wrote another copy, extremely large, each of its lines being a cubit (*dhar*) in length, and even longer. Having finished, decorated and bound (the manuscript), he tied it on a barrow and took it to the palace of the Lord of the Time. Hearing that, the sultan came out to meet him, accompanied by all the clergy, dignitaries, amirs, and pillars of the state, and rewarded the calligrapher with great honors, marks of respect and endless favors.⁶²

The dynastic image that Timur established, however, was not shaped solely by his individual taste; indeed, Timur's greatest contribution to the empire's cultural vision was his creation of a diverse artistic environment in Samarqand. By pursuing a policy of bringing to his

capital craftsmen and artists from the lands he conquered, Timur established an elite corps of artisans who gave him, and ultimately his descendants, access to the major artistic and literary traditions of the eastern Islamic world. Fifteenth-century Arabic,⁶³ Persian,⁶⁴ and European⁶⁵ sources record the vast number of craftsmen and artists forcibly transferred to the ruler's new capital from Iran, Syria, Anatolia, and India. From Damascus alone, for instance, he took "learned men and craftsmen and all who excelled in any art, the most skilled weavers, tailors, gem-cutters, carpenters, makers of head-coverings, farriers, painters, bow-makers, falconers, in short craftsmen of every kind."⁶⁶ By doing this, he provided the Timurids with the means to form a new and coherent system of images.

The numerous carved wooden doors and intricate tile panels made in Samarqand during the first years of the fifteenth century by artists from Iran and Syria testify to the impact of this movement of talent. The complex inscriptions in tile mosaic at the Gur-i Amir



fig. 14
North facade of the Shrine of
Ahmad Yasavi
Turkestan, c. 1397

fig. 15 (opposite)
The Shrine of Ahmad Yasavi,
Turkestan, c. 1397

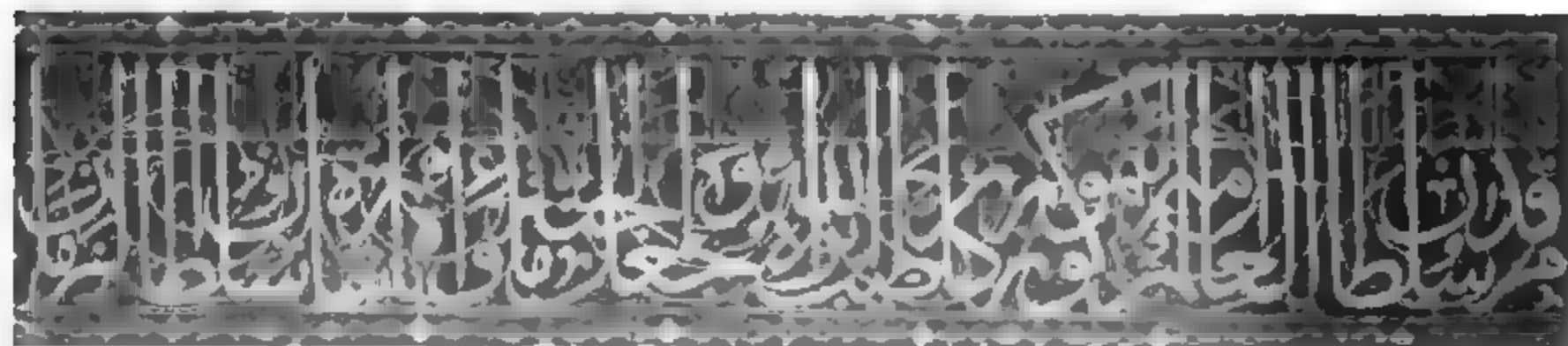
(cat. no. 8), for instance, are typical of Iranian work and may have been made by artists taken from Isfahan or Shiraz. The doors to the Shrine of Qutham ibn Abbas at the Shah-i Zinda, carved by Sayyid Yusuf of Shiraz in 1405, and the doors to the Gur-i Amir (fig. 15), decorated with ivory and wood marquetry (a technique associated with the Mamluk craftsmen of Syria and Egypt), are among the finest examples of objects made at Timur's court. Although an important wood-working tradition existed in Central Asia prior to Timur's rise to power, as evidenced by a Koran stand (cat. no. 9), the Timurids eventually came to favor the more intricately worked and densely patterned floral and geometric designs of the newly arrived artists from western Iran and Syria.

The surviving metalware from Timur's reign appears to be based on forms indigenous to Transoxiana and Khurasan (fig. 68, ill. p. 208). The basin from the Shrine of Ahmad Yasavi, for instance, is derived from the Kartid metalware of Herat, and the shrine's oil lamps have their closest parallels in work from the Golden Horde.⁶⁷ Yet Timur probably also had access to craftsmen familiar with the great metalwork of the Mamluks, and it is unlikely that the Timurids were not affected by it. Later Timurid metalware shares the extraordinary technical refinement of such Mamluk works as the mid-fourteenth-century doors (fig. 16) at the madrasa of Sultan Hasan in Cairo. The large portals are composed of an intricate series of radiating patterns and geometric forms, which are inlaid with gold and silver; they have a jewellike vibrancy that resembles the effects of later Timurid metalware (cat. nos. 57, 152, ill. pp. 161, 273).

cat. no. 8

Calligraphic panel from the Gur-i Amir
Samarqand, c. 1405-19

fig. 15

Doors from the Gur-i Amir
Samarqand, c. 1404
Wood inlaid with ivory
277 x 61 cm (109 x 24 1/4 in.)
Leningrad, State Hermitage

cat. no. 9

Koran stand

Central Asia, dated A.H. Dhul-Hijja
761 (A.D. November-December 1359)



48



cat. no. 10

Dragon-handled cup
Siberia, c. 1100–1125

Architecture, too, was affected by the arrival of craftsmen from Syria, Iran, and India. Through their introduction of transverse vaults, their exploration of the potential of double domes, and their use of carved stone and elaborate decorative schemes in glazed brick and mosaic tile faience (cat. no. 8)—a relatively rare technique in Central Asia prior to Timur's reign—a new approach to architecture emerged.⁶⁸ The most striking aspects of the Timurids' new building program were the extraordinary monumentality of the edifices (made possible by the use of new vaulting systems and domes supported by elongated drums), their unobstructed, freestanding nature, and their complete sheathing in colorful tiles.

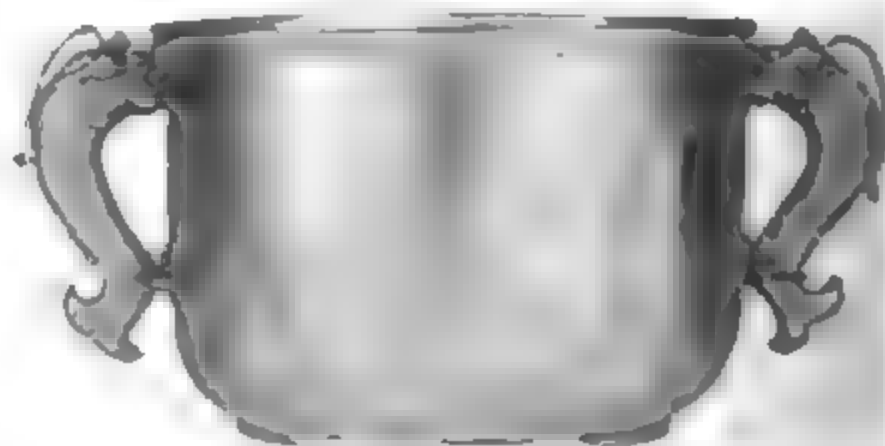
The Timurids' new visual vocabulary was not only affected by the diverse aesthetic heritages of the architects, craftsmen, and artists brought to Samarqand but also by the places Timur saw during his conquests and the works of art that he acquired as booty or through trade. For example, the Friday mosque at Samarqand (fig. 5) may have been inspired, at least in part, by the Mongol monuments of Uljaytu that Timur encountered at Sultaniyya in northwestern Iran when he occupied the city in 1385.⁶⁹ Like the Friday mosque, Uljaytu's mosque was located opposite the madrasa of his favorite wife and had a monumental projecting portal with cable binding and framing minarets, multiple small domes, an exterior revetment of glazed tile, and a marble dado.⁷⁰

Timur's defeat of Toqtamish gave him access to the elaborate gold vessels with dragon- and fish-shaped handles that were made for the rulers of the Golden Horde (cat. nos. 10–11). Among the other objects plundered by Timur were works of art such as the

Byzantine doors taken from the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid's treasury after the conquest of Bursa in 1402. These doors were set up in one of his wives' tents, and according to Clavijo they were

covered with plates of silver gilt ornamented with patterns in blue enamel work, having insets that were very finely made in gold plate. All this was so beautifully wrought that evidently never in Tartary [China] nor indeed in our western land of Spain could it have been come to. In one door was figured the image of Saint Peter while the other was Saint Paul, and each saint had a book in his hands, the entire work being of silver.⁷¹

Samarqand's position on one of the great trade routes between Beijing and Europe also meant that European, Indian, and especially Chinese goods were almost constantly present at Timur's court. Chinese objects were particularly valued as the Chinese craftsmen were renowned in both the Islamic and Turco-Mongol worlds for their skill,⁷² and in many cases both the originals and copies, filtered through such intermediaries as the Golden Horde, were available to Timur.⁷³ Ambassadorial exchanges, like the ones that brought An Ji Dao from the Ming court in 1395 and Clavijo from the Spanish court in 1403, were also a plentiful source of objects.⁷⁴ In exchange for horses, textiles, and armor from the Timurids, the Chinese sent precious stones, porcelains, banknotes, and other curiosities.⁷⁵ Even after relations with the Ming court

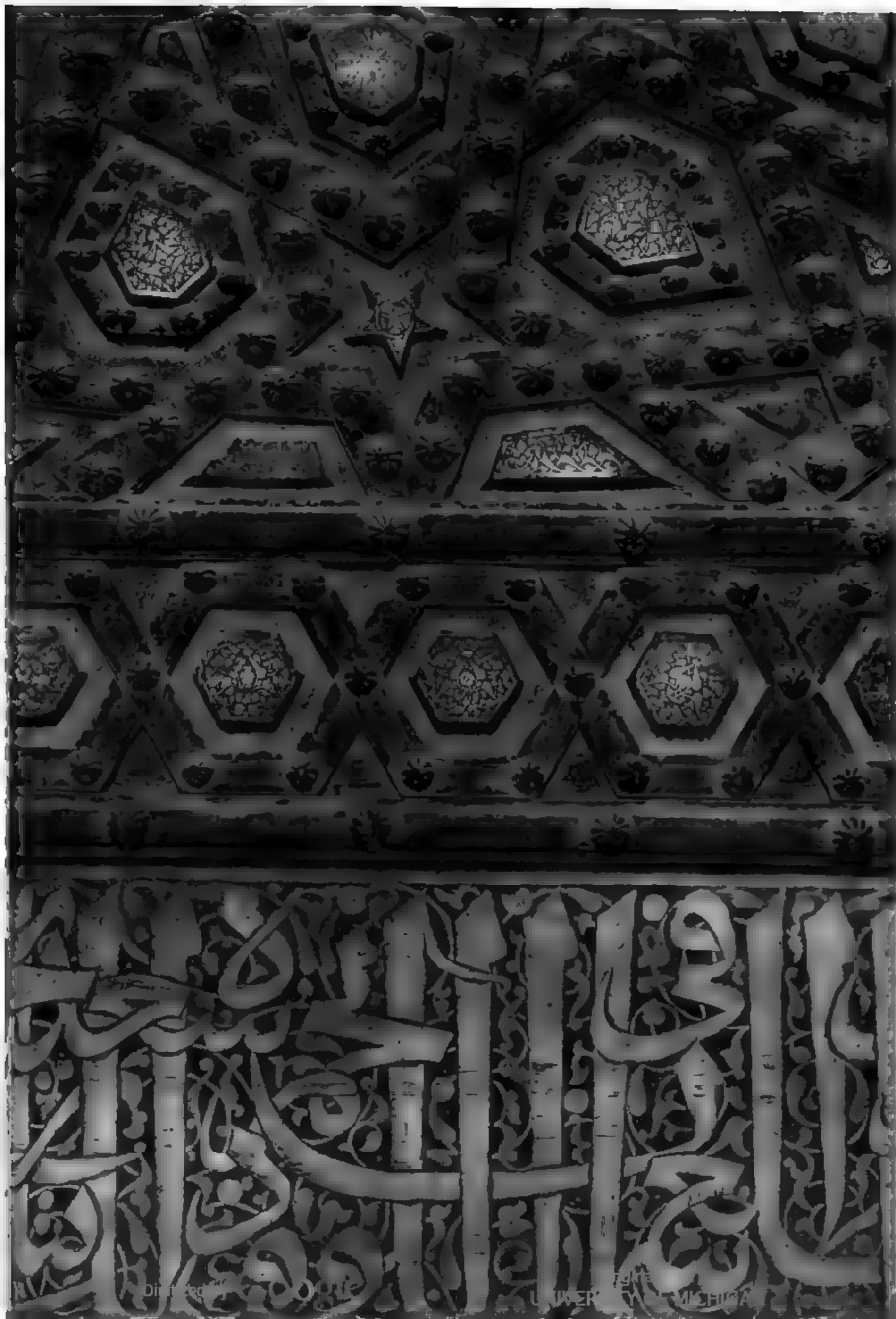


cat. no. 11

Fish-handled bowl
Tzitzavi Gordesche, c. 1250–1350

fig. 16

Doors of the madrasa of Sultan Hasan
(detail)
Cairo, c. 1360
Brass inlaid with gold and silver



were disrupted in 1403, Chinese goods continued to arrive in Samarqand and to be valued by the Timurids. Although the effect of these Chinese objects on the Timurid aesthetic was not fully evident until the second quarter of the fifteenth century, from that point on they had a significant effect on numerous Timurid motifs and designs.

10 In terms of the cultural development of the dynasty, however, the most significant step Timur took was laying the groundwork for the Timurid *kitabkhana* (royal library or workshop). A Persianate institution whose form and organization preceded the Timurids, *kitabkhanas* were responsible for the production of books and other luxurious artifacts. The central role of this institution in the evolution of later Islamic art grew out of the importance that books have always held in Muslim culture. From the earliest periods Muslim powers united political activity with an interest in books. Accordingly it was the staff of the *kitabkhana*, painters and calligraphers in particular, who were charged with visualizing princely aspirations and affirming a ruler's legitimacy and power.

After Timur's death it was the *kitabkhanas* of the princes that were at the heart of the Timurid cultural complex. They established the cohesive and unified visual language that made the dynasty's artistic image so revered in the Islamic world. Their books were the matrix of the dynasty's artistic activity. There is no concrete evidence that Timur established a *kitabkhana* in Samarqand, yet one must have existed in the capital. From his conquests he seized many artists, like the celebrated painter Abdul-Hayy,⁷⁶ who were trained in the Persianate traditions of the *kitabkhana*. Although Timur's attitude toward Persians was ambivalent at best—he saw them as weak and contemptible, often blaming them for his princes' misbehavior⁷⁷—he was acutely aware of the Persian *kitabkhanas'* celebrated literary and artistic achievements in glorifying kingship in the Islamic world.

The great royal libraries of medieval Islam, those of Baghdad, Cairo, and Córdoba, were much celebrated, even in Timur's time, and their activities may have served as models for Timur. Most historical accounts dwell on their prodigious holdings; estimates of the number of volumes in the Fatimid library in Cairo, for example, range from one hundred twenty thousand to two million volumes. But an equally important compo-

nent of these libraries was their maintenance of both facilities and personnel to translate, copy, illuminate, and bind manuscripts dealing with a wide variety of religious and secular subjects.⁷⁸ Although access to these libraries was limited, they helped articulate in visual as well as literary terms an ideology for the ruling elite.

Less is known of early libraries farther to the east in the Iranian world, though they clearly played an integral role in the palace life of many rulers. For example, the Buyid ruler Azududdawla's spectacular library in Shiraz in the late tenth century reportedly consisted of a series of two-storied, domed buildings surrounded by gardens with lakes and waterways. The complex's 360 rooms included a large, vaulted chamber with adjoining rooms that actually housed the books; stored in decorative cabinets, they were catalogued and maintained by a director, a librarian, and a curator.⁷⁹

During the eleventh century new, more public libraries, usually attached to madrasas, arose in the eastern Islamic world under the aegis of the Turkic Seljuq dynasty. The state, placing greater emphasis on religious orthodoxy, used the madrasas as a primary instrument in the propagation of political and religious policy. The contents of the libraries of these institutions, severely restricted under government guidelines, profoundly influenced the cultural development of the official classes.⁸⁰

Evidence of the influential role of Islamic libraries and manuscript production in the dissemination of royal policy can be seen again a few centuries later. During the early fourteenth century the powerful Il-Khanid vizier Rashiduddin established a *kitabkhana* that perhaps served as a more specific model for later Timurid efforts in the arts of the book. He constructed an enormous tomb complex in Tabriz, known as the Rab'-i Rashidi, which housed a manuscript repository and its small staff.

The surviving *waqfiyya* (endowment deed)⁸¹ for the Rab'-i Rashidi provides information about the systematic manuscript production that occurred in the Il-Khanid *kitabkhana*. The deed states that Rashiduddin commissioned the copying of religious manuscripts, which were to be made according to special guidelines. While the deed does not identify where these religious books were to be produced, it specifies that other manuscripts, such as Rashiduddin's own works (especially

his great historical compilation, *Jami' al-tawarikh* [Gatherer of chronicles]), were to be executed in the Rab'-i Rashidi, following predetermined specifications for paper, script, collation, and binding (cat. no. 12A). Illustrators for these texts are not mentioned, but the deed notes that "slaves" were to be assigned to calligraphy, painting, and gilding. Once completed, manuscripts were registered at the Tabriz judiciary and then dispatched throughout the empire to disseminate the

Although the Rab'-i Rashidi was plundered after Rashiduddin's fall in 1318 and again in 1336, it may have continued to function as a manuscript center late into the fourteenth century under the Jalayirids, though little is known about the organization of the Jalayirid kitabkhana.³¹ In turn Jalayirid artists and their work affected the development of Timurid art.

While equally little is known about Timur's kitabkhana, he clearly was familiar with the potential of this

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CAT. NO. 12A

"The Mountains of India," from a *Jami' al-tawarikh* of Rashiduddin, Tabriz, dated A.H. 714 (A.D. 1314), f. 218

dynasty's perspective. The finished works, both religious and secular, were displayed high in the *qibla nuan* (the open-vaulted porch facing Mecca) as revered objects—a startling confirmation of the importance of the book's role in Islamic society.³²

The surviving historical works of Rashiduddin and others attest to the presence of a coordinated book production system, which ensured not only the accuracy of the authors' works but their specific and uniform appearance as well. Apart from facilitating the process of production, these standards fostered the proliferation of an official painting identifiable with the dynasty and complimentary to its aims.

institution, as he was aware of the vast body of Persian literature it generated. In his hostile history of the warlord, Ibn Arabshah wrote:

Whether travelling or at rest, he [Timur] was assiduous in listening to the reading of chronicles, the stories of prophets (prayers and peace upon them), the deeds of kings, and the accounts of men of the past—all in Persian. As these readings were repeated to him and their measures resounded in his ears, he so grasped and retained their substance that it became as a second nature to him to such an extent that if a reader stumbled he would correct him.



cat. no. 128

"Sakyamuni Offers Fruit to the Devil"
From a *Jami' al-tawarikh* of Rashiduddin
Tabrizi, dated A.H. 714 (A.D. 1314)
f. 142

Ibn Arabshah, however, was not impressed by Timur's knowledge and added, "Even a jackass learns from repetition!"⁸⁴

Timur was keenly aware of the importance of books for legitimating his rule. They were a key component for positioning himself as a rightful successor to previous kings in the Islamic world. Manuscripts like the *Jami' al-tawarikh* of Rashiduddin, which was intended to accomplish the same goal for the Mongol Il-Khanids, appear to have provided a model for this effort. An illustrated copy of the *Jami' al-tawarikh* was in Shah-rukh's possession (cat. no. 128) and had a major impact on the creation of a historical idiom of painting at the Timurid courts at Herat and Shiraz.

Sources state that as part of Timur's effort to establish the significance of his rule, Uighur and Iranian secretaries constantly accompanied him and recorded all his actions and words.⁸⁵ The rough minutes were then read to Timur so that their content might be verified (not to mention edited and censored) for subsequent inclusion in the official court chronicles, which

were copied in the kitabkhana.⁸⁶ These chronicles provided the basis for many books that were produced for Timur or begun during his lifetime. They include

Josh u khurosh (The raging and roaring) of Shaykh Mahmud Zangi Ajami Kirmani and its *Zayl* (Continuation) by his son Qutbuddin, both in Persian;

Futuhāt-i Miranshahi (The conquests of Miranshah) of Sa'd Allah Kirmani, in Persian;

Roznama-i futuhāt-i Hindustani (Journal of Indian conquests) of Qazi Nasiruddin Umar, in Persian;

Tarikh-i khami (Khanid history), in Turki;

Zafarnama (The book of conquest) of Safiyuddin Khuttalani Samarqandi, in Turki;

Zafarnama of Nizamuddin Ali Shami, written in 1404, in Persian.⁸⁷

Of these works probably none was more important than the *Zafarnama* of Shami. After working for Jalayirid patrons,⁸⁸ Shami was commissioned by Timur to write a history of his rise to power that was to be free from "rhetorical artifice" and "preciosity."⁸⁹ Two redactions of the *Zafarnama* were submitted in March 1404, the first dedicated to Timur and the second to his grandson Umar ibn Miranshah. While later fifteenth-century copies of the *Zafarnama* of Shami still exist, the original redactions have disappeared.⁹⁰

Unfortunately none of the other historical works commissioned by Timur remains either. Several late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century illustrated manuscripts from Iran, however, have survived, and these suggest what painting under Timur may have looked like. They are

A *Shahnama* (Book of kings) of Firdawsi, copied in 1370–71, presumably at Shiraz;

A *Diwan* (Collected works) of Khwaju Kirmani, copied by Mir Ali Tabrizi in 1396 at Baghdad for the Jalayirid ruler Sultan Ahmad;

A *Collection of Epics*, copied by Muhammad ibn Sa'id al-Qari in 1397–98, presumably at Shiraz;

An *Anthology*, copied by Mansur Bihbihani in 1398, presumably at Fars;

A *Diwan* of Sultan Ahmad, copied in 1404.



fig. 16
 "Bahrām Gur Killing a Dragon"
 From a *Shahnama* of Firdawsi
 Iran, c. 1330
 Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
 on paper
 20 x 20 cm (7 7/8 x 7 7/8 in.)
 The Cleveland Museum of Art,
 Grace Rainey Rogers Fund, 49.658

fig. 17
 "Khusraw Parvā Listening to the
 Musician Barhad"
 From a *Shahnama* of Firdawsi
 Shiraz, dated A.H. 772 (A.D. 1371)
 Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
 on paper
 11 x 17 cm (4 1/4 x 6 5/8 in.)
 Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
 H.1411, E. 2762

The illuminations and images in these manuscripts reflect the variety of late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century Persianate painting.

Within this context the twelve illustrations in the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi, made for a member of the Muzaffarid dynasty, are in some ways the most conservative works. Structured around simple compositions, peopled with stiff figures, and painted with a modest number of details, these images are straightforward and narrative in their orientation (fig. 17). At the same time, however, they represent a substantial and inventive departure from earlier Persian painting. Their bright colors, idealized settings, contrived composi-

tions, decorative patterns, and strong rhythms contrast with the more naturalistic paintings of the Il-Khanids (fig. 18), in which Chinese and even European influences are readily apparent. This new interest in abstracted and idealized imagery had an impact on Timurid painting that continued until the end of the fifteenth century.

The nine paintings in the Jalayirid *Diwan* of Khwaju Kirmāni, one of which is signed by the celebrated Jalayirid master Junayd (cat. no. 13), show tendencies similar to these illustrations but are far more detailed and developed. Their densely organized scenes, with subtle rhythms and colors, have a fairy-tale quality that transcends their narrative function. Minute details and delicately rendered figures add to the intensity of these illustrations, which depict the turbulent romance of the Persian prince and princess Humay and Humayun.



OVERLEAF (left)
 CAT. NO. 11
 "Humay Recognizes Humayun after
 Their Battle"
 From a *Diwan* of Khwaju Kirmāni
 Baghdad, dated A.H. Jumada I 798
 (A.D. March 1396)
 F. 238

OVERLEAF (right)
 CAT. NO. 11
 "Humay and Humayun on the Day
 after Their Wedding"
 From a *Diwan* of Khwaju Kirmāni
 Baghdad, dated A.H. Jumada I 798
 (A.D. March 1396)
 F. 238





The paintings from the *Anthology* copied in 1398 (cat. no. 14) achieve a somewhat different, though equally lyrical and elegant effect. Consisting primarily of a series of landscapes realized in thinly applied pigments, these images present a highly abstracted vision of nature, which is decorative and poetic.

56 Illumination in these manuscripts also has a lyrical quality, as is evident from the finely executed series of double-page compositions in the *Diwan* of Sultan Ahmad (cat. no. 15). With their intense colors and

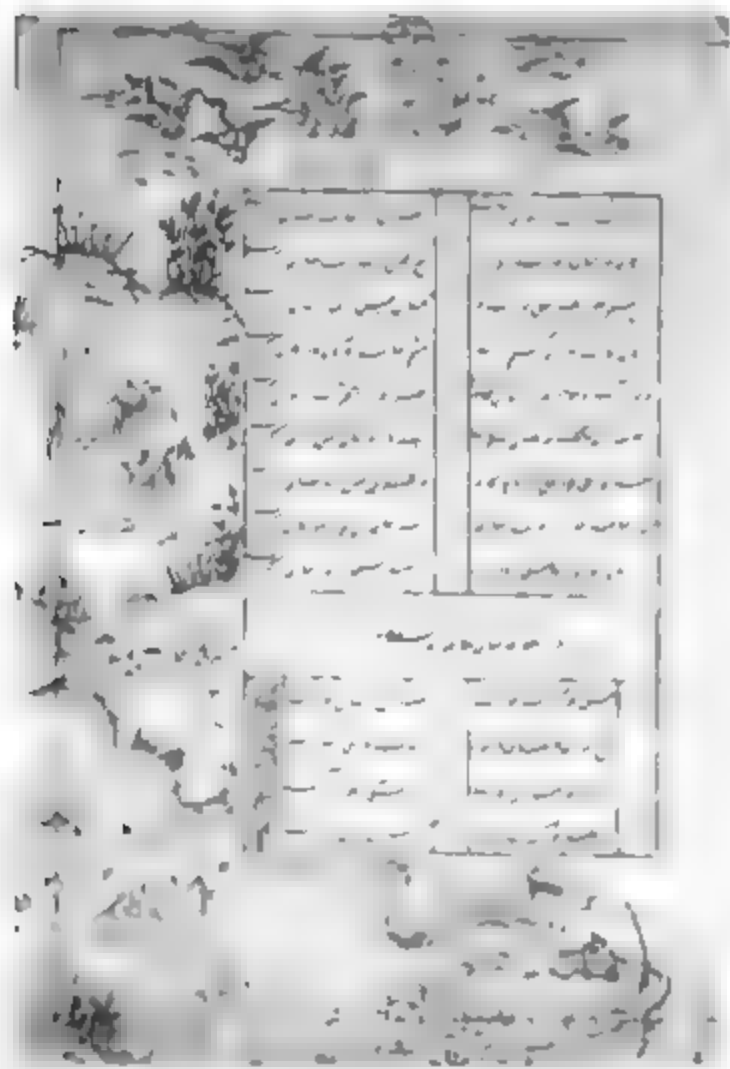


fig. 19

Folio with marginal drawing from a *Diwan* of Sultan Ahmad Baghladi (?), c. 1400–1401
Ink and gold on paper
24.2 x 20.3 cm (11 1/2 x 8 in.)
Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art, 32.30, f. 17a

cat. no. 14 (opposite)

Landscape from a *Portra Anthology*
Iran, dated 831, Muharram 803
(14 12, September 1398)
F. 12.8b

intricate geometric designs, these images are among the most exciting works to survive from this period. Their hallucinatory effects represent an aesthetic standard that resonated throughout the fifteenth century at the Timurid court, as artists sought to create ever more refined and effective images.

It is the sixteen paintings from the *Collection of Epics*, however, that are the most distinct images of this group. Set for the most part against brilliant gold backgrounds, the paintings are usually composed of only one or two large, forcefully rendered figures (cat. no. 16A–B). Extraneous details are carefully suppressed to emphasize the figures' heroic actions. Compared with the densely patterned illustrations from Khwaju Kirmani's *Diwan*, these paintings seem stark and minimal. Although the patron of this manuscript remains unknown, it was executed at Shiraz while the city was under Timurid control, and the simple directness of its images may represent an attempt to illustrate the great epics of Iranian literature for a Timurid patron—perhaps even Timur himself—who would have been unfamiliar with these stories.

The images in these manuscripts are striking for their boldness, originality, and technical refinement. In their articulation of the basic themes of Persian book illustration—hunting, feasting, princely trysts, battles, and royal enthronements—they represent the aesthetic and conceptual options that were available to the Timurid kitabkhana within the context of narrative painting. In the decades immediately following Timur's death these forms and themes were manipulated and distilled until a coherent and potent imagery that glorified Timurid rule was established.

Yet the work produced in the Timurid kitabkhanas after Timur's death did not entirely conform to the traditional rules of fourteenth-century narrative painting. The Timurids became renowned, in part, for producing images that existed independently from texts, that were visual icons in their own right. This development represented a major change in Islamic art in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Some of the most exciting paintings and drawings that would have been accessible to Timur and his followers were executed outside the normal traditions of manuscript illustration. The drawings in the margins of another copy of the *Diwan* of Sultan Ahmad (fig. 19), for instance, are completely unrelated to the Sultan's



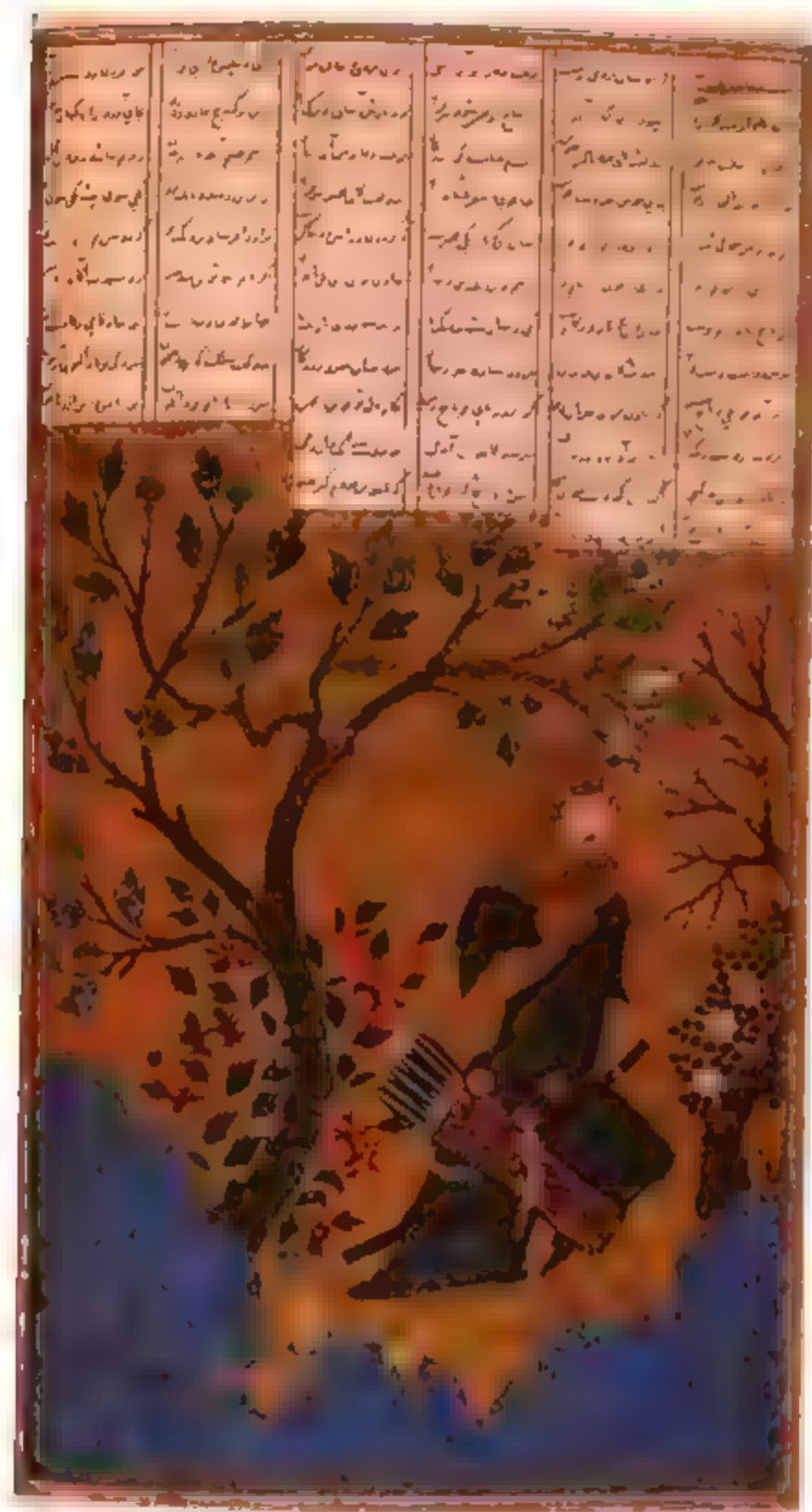
cat. no. 15

Illumination from a *Diwan* of Sultan
Ahmad
Baghdad, dated A.H. Ramadan 809
A.D. June 1406
ff. 15b-16a



poems. They depict landscapes, conversations, and scenes of pastoral nomadism that give the appearance of being drawn from life rather than being derived from the conventionalized imagery that traditionally accompanied Persian poetry. Paralleling this departure in content are the drawings' illusionistic effects, which are dramatically different from the flat, stereotyped forms of earlier and contemporary manuscript paintings.

A number of very large paintings that can be attributed to the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries also clearly operate outside the conventions of manuscript illustration and are, if anything, more closely related to wall paintings. Outstanding among these paintings are "A Princely Couple" (cat. no. 17), "Jonah and the Whale" (fig. 20), "A Prince Killing a Serpent" (fig. 21), "A Prince Attacking a Lion" (fig. 22), and "Rustam and Rakhsh Treated by the Simurgh" (fig. 23).



cat. no. 163

"A Warrior on Mount Damavand"

From a Collection of Epics

Shiraz(?), dated A.H. 800

A.D. 1397-98,

f. 113b



cat. no. 164

"Rustam Slays the White Div
in His Cave"

From a Collection of Epics

Shiraz?, dated A.H. 800

A.D. 1397-98,

f. 100a



cat. no. 17 (opposite)

"A Princely Couple"

Iran or Central Asia, c. 1400

fig. 20

"Jurah and the Whale"

Iran or Central Asia, c. 1400

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper
11.8 x 48.1 cm (4 1/4 x 19 in.)New York, The Metropolitan Museum
of Art, purchase, Joseph Pulitzer
bequest, 1913, 33.111

With their bold compositions and their large scale, it is tempting to associate these paintings with Timur's patronage.

While these images are representative of an emerging approach, because of their scale and lack of accompanying text, they are based on artistic conventions of Muzaffarid and Jalayirid manuscript painting. The elongated bodies of the man and woman in "A Princely Couple," for instance, with their attenuated limbs, oval faces, and graceful lines resemble many of the figures in a *Khamse* (Quintet) of Nizami made in Baghdad in 1386.²¹ Similarly, the horseman in "A Prince Killing a Serpent" has a forceful posture and well-defined features, elements that characterize many late fourteenth-century images. However, the effect of these paintings, with their large scale, vibrant though thinly applied colors, bold action and gestures, and often simplified backgrounds, is unprecedented. The dramatic composition of "A Prince Attacking a Lion," for instance, has a vitality and directness for which there is no equivalent in either Muzaffarid or Jalayirid painting.

The lack of text and the large size of the paintings reflect their not being bound by the codes that governed manuscript illustration. While some of these

works may have been used for recitations of the *Shahnama*, as they seem to depict events from that manuscript, they were meant to be viewed as independent works of art. The simplicity and directness of their compositions permit them to be interpreted without reference to specific stories. "A Prince Attacking a Lion," for instance, can be understood as a scene in the *Shahnama* in which the legendary hero Bahram Gur is hunting or more generally as a prince demonstrating his skills. "A Princely Couple" can be interpreted as either an amorous rendezvous of two lovers or the meeting of Humay and Humayun (or other lovers from Persian literature). "A Prince Killing a Serpent" clearly follows the iconography of Bahram Gur slaying the dragon from the *Shahnama*, but like "A Prince Attacking a Lion" it can also be seen as a demonstration of princely prowess. Appreciation of these works is not dependent on a detailed awareness of Persian literature, for their imagery is that of the life of the prince in general. This interest in individual paintings and studies flourished in the fifteenth century and became one of the most expressive aspects of Timurid artistic activity.

Through the incorporation of the numerous preexisting artistic and literary traditions of Central Asia





fig. 11

"A Prince Killing a Serpent"
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1400
Opaque watercolor and gold on paper
62 x 19.5 cm (24 3/4 x 7 1/4 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H.1152, f. 55b



fig. 12

"A Prince Attacking a Lion"
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1400
Opaque watercolor and gold on paper
48.5 x 33.5 cm (19 1/4 x 13 1/4 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H.1152, f. 71a



fig. 23

"Rusam and Rakhsh Treated
by the Simurgh"
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1400
Opaque watercolor and gold on paper
34.3 x 50 cm (13 1/2 x 19 1/2 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H. 2132, f. 48a

and Iran, Timur established the basis for a new visual language that was to crystallize under the patronage of his descendants. While the buildings and the objects made for him and his immediate family are not radically different from earlier models, several new directions are apparent. The most obvious are the experiments with new forms or new combinations of forms, as in the vaulting systems of the Shrine of Ahmad Yasavi, and the emphasis on monumental scale. The massive structures erected for Timur in Samarqand, Shahr-i Sabz, and other cities as well as the objects like the basin made for the Shrine of Ahmad Yasavi contributed to an image of power for the dynasty through their size.

The vision that Timur sought to articulate through these objects was ultimately codified after his death by the kitabkhana system, whose foundations were laid during his reign. The official histories, other manuscripts, and paintings that were produced at his court celebrated the glory of the great warlord's rule while situating his achievements within the larger context of Islamic sovereignty. They most likely filtered the values of his Turco-Mongol background, with its semi-nomadic steppe orientation, through the prism of urban-centered Persianate culture: the Turco-Mongol

ideals of military prowess, ruggedness, and charismatic leadership were expressed through and tempered by the literary tradition of Iran. This attempt to legitimate Timur's rule, and by extension his dynasty, through Persian literary and artistic traditions initiated a process that continued until the end of the fifteenth century. Although the Timurids never fully reconciled their Turco-Mongol values with their interest in Persian culture, the interaction of these two forces provides a framework for examining their artistic accomplishments.

Timur's death in 1405 prevented him from taking advantage of the new artistic directions that had begun to develop at his court. His sons and grandsons, however, were able to exploit these developments, using them to create a sophisticated and refined visual image for the dynasty. In 1411 the governor of Samarqand, Ulugh-Beg, issued a decree freeing all of the craftsmen and artists who had been forcibly settled there by the great warlord.⁹⁴ Although the rationale for this act was ostensibly to restore the efficacy of the "Sacred Law of Islam,"⁹⁵ its effect was to disperse throughout Timurid Iran and Central Asia craftsmen and artists who had been charged with visualizing Timur's dreams and aspirations, power and glory.

1. Walter J. Fischel, *Ibn Khaldun and Tamerlane* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1952), p. 47.
2. For a more detailed discussion of the physical setting of the Timurid world, see Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilber, *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 1: 18-34.
3. Joseph Fletcher, "The Mongols: Ecological and Social Perspectives," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 46, no. 1 (1986), 13.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.
6. David Morgan, *The Mongols* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 73-83.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 161.
8. N. N. Poppe, "The Karasakpai Inscription by Timur," *Travaux du Département Oriental* 1 (1939), 186. Trans. James E. Bernhardt.
9. H. R. Roemer, "Timur in Iran," in *The Cambridge History of Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 6: 78.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 43. See Wheeler Thackston, "Glossary of Titles and Terms," in *A Century of Princes: Sources in Timurid History and Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, in press).
15. John E. Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," typescript, 1986, pp. 44-50.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
17. This stone was found by Ulugh-Beg during his campaign against the nomads of Mughulistan in 1424-25 and set over the emperor's tomb in Samarqand the following year. For details see Oleg Grabar's review of A. A. Semenov, "Inscriptions on the Tombs of Timur and of His Descendants in the Gur-e Amir," *Ars Orientalis* 2 (1957): 354-55.
18. This notion originates with the teachings of the Sufi master Suhrawardī, who saw Being and Knowledge as irradiations of the Pure Light, which rises in the east. For more information on this, especially as it pertains to the Timurids' descendants, the Mughals, see John F. Richards, "The Formulation of Imperial Authority under Akbar and Jahangir," in *Kingship and Authority in South Asia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, South Asian Studies, 1981), pp. 265-66.
19. Francis Woodman Cleaves, trans., *Yuan Ch'ao mi Shih* (Secret history of the Mongols) (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), 1: 4.
20. Grabar, review of Semenov, p. 353.
21. *Ibid.*
22. Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 2: 430.
23. Roemer, "Timur in Iran," p. 44.
24. Linda Komaroff, "The Timurid Phase in Iranian Metalwork: Formulation and Realization of a Style," Ph.D. diss. (Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1984), p. 187.
25. Bernard O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers in assoc. with Urdenz Publications, 1987), p. 89.
26. Ibn Arabshah, *Tamerlane or Timur the Great Amir, from the Arabic Life of Ahmed ibn Arabshah*, trans. J. H. Saunders (London: Luzac & Co., 1916), p. 214.
27. Beatrice Manz, "Tamerlane and the Symbolism of Sovereignty," typescript, 1988, p. 10.
28. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, 2: 412.
29. Ibn Arabshah, *Tamerlane*, p. 295.
30. Beatrice Manz, "Politics and Control under Tamerlane," Ph.D. diss. (Harvard University, 1983), pp. 4-7.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-11.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
34. Fletcher, "The Mongols," p. 25.
35. Timur's selection of Pir-Muhammad was not arbitrary. Like Timur's earlier selection, Muhammad-Sultan, Pir-Muhammad's half-brother who had died in the campaign against the Ottomans, he was a son of Jahangir (d. 1375), who was Timur's only son from a free-born wife. Timur's other sons, Shahrukh and Miranshah, both of whom survived their father, were born of slave-concubines. In passing over these two, Timur sought to enhance the legitimacy of his dynasty by upholding the Mongol belief in the primacy of free birth.
36. Ibn Arabshah, *Tamerlane*, p. 310.
37. Ruy González de Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane, 1403-1406*, trans. Guy le Strange (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1928), pp. 218-190.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 219-20.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 253.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 258.
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*, p. 260.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 238. See also Peter Andrews, "The Felt Tent in Middle Asia: The Nomadic Tradition and Its Interaction with Princely Tentage," Ph.D. diss. (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1980), pp. 561-66.
44. Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*, p. 239.
45. Ibn Arabshah, *Tamerlane*, p. 216.
46. O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan*, pp. 104-5.
47. For a detailed discussion of Timur's architectural projects, see Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 1: Appendix 3, no. 24.
48. This was used mainly as a treasury and prison according to V. V. Barthold, *Ulugh-Beg*, vol. 2 of *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, trans. V. and T. Minorsky (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958), pp. 40-41.
49. For a description of this mosque, see Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 1: 255-60.
50. Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, *Baburnama*, trans. Annette Susannah Beveridge (London: Luzac & Co., 1971), p. 77.
51. Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*, p. 280.
52. The source of this attribution appears to be A. Gulchin-i Ma'am, *Rahnama-yi ganjina-i Qur'an* (Catalogue of the Qur'an exhibition) (Mashhad, 1966), no. 59.
53. O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan*, p. 82.
54. For a detailed discussion of the Shah-i Zinda, see Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 1: 233-52.
55. Ibn Arabshah, *Tamerlane*, p. 310.
56. For more on this building, see Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 1: 271-73. Nearly four hundred square meters of a spectacular floor of glazed brick and ceramic tile have recently been discovered by Soviet archaeologists at the site of the palace; see N. N. Kouzmina et al., "Ak-Saray v Shakhrisabze" (Aq Saray in Shahr-i Sabz), *Strouptstvo i arkhitektura Uzbekistana* (Tashkent, 1985-86).
57. Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*, p. 208. A fifteenth-century drawing preserved in an album (H.2152, f. 87a) now in the Topkapı Sarayı Library suggests what this composition probably looked like.
58. For a detailed discussion of this building, see Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 1: 284-88.
59. "Mir Ali-Sher's Preface to His Diwan," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.
60. Three of the oil lamps are still at the Shrine of Ahmad Yasawi; two are in the State Hermitage (SA-15832, SA-15931); and one, now dismembered, is shared between the State Hermitage (SA-12681) and Musée du Louvre (AO

7080, AD 7079). Although several of the lamps have inscriptions dating them to June 17, 1399, Anatoli A. Ivanov ("O bronzovykh izdeliakh kniazia XIV v. mavroileia khodzha Akhmeda Yassova," *Sredniaia azia i ee sosedi* [Moscow: 1981], pp. 80–82) and others have suggested that these inscriptions were added at a later date.

61. Komaroff, "The Timurid Phase," p. 628.

62. V. Minorsky, trans., *Calligraphers and Painters. A Treatise by Qasim Ahmad, Son of Mir Munshi* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery Publications, Smithsonian Institution, 1959), p. 64.

63. Ibn Arabshah, *Tamerlane*, p. 161.

64. Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi, *Zafarnama*, trans. Petis de la Croix (London: V. Darbis, 1723); and Nizam al-Din Shami, *Zafarnama: Histoire des Conquetes de Tamerlan*, ed. F. Taquet, in *Monografie Archivu Orientalniho* (Prague: Czechoslovak Oriental Institute, 1937).

65. Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*, pp. 286–87.

66. Ibn Arabshah, *Tamerlane*, p. 161.

67. Komaroff, "The Timurid Phase," pp. 812–17.

68. For a detailed discussion of early Timurid vaulting systems, see Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 1: 109–10.

69. Sheila Blair, "The Mongol Capital of Sultaniyah, 'The Imperial,'" *Iran* 24 (1986): 146.

70. *Ibid.*

71. Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*, p. 249.

72. *Ibid.*

73. G. A. Fyodorov-Davydov, *The Culture of the Golden Horde Cities*, trans. H. Bartlett Wells, International Series, no. 198 (Oxford: B.A.R., 1984), p. 11.

74. Emil Vasilievich Bretschneider, *Medieval Researches from Eastern Asiatic Sources* (London: K. Paul Trübner, 1910), 3: 260–61.

75. *Ibid.*, pp. 259–61.

76. "Dost Muhammad's Introduction to the Bahram Mirza Album," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*. Despite Abdul-Hayy's fame, no work can be securely attributed to his hand.

77. Manz, "Politics and Control," p. 318.

78. Gulnar Bosch, John Carswell, and Guy Petherbridge, *Islamic Bookbinding*, exh. cat. (Chicago: Oriental Institute Museum/University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 7.

79. Johannes Pedersen, *The Arabic Book*, trans. Geoffrey French (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 123–24.

80. *Ibid.*, pp. 125–29.

81. "Waqf-nama-yi Rab'-i Rashidi," with

an introduction by Iraq Alshar and M. Minovi, *Insharat-i Anjuman-i Athar-i Milli* 87 (1972).

82. Sheila Blair, "Ilkhanid Architecture and Society: An Analysis of the Endowment Deed of the Rabi'-i Rashidi," *Iran* 22 (1984): 67–90.

83. Basil Gray, *The World History of Rashid al-Din* (London: Faber & Faber, 1978), p. 17; Gray, "History of Miniature Painting: The Fourteenth Century," in Gray, ed., *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia, 14th–16th Centuries* (Boulder: Shambala, 1979), pp. 116–17.

84. "As'ih al-Maqdur fi Akhbar Timur," trans. John E. Woods, in Woods, "The Rise of Timurid Historiography," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 46, no. 2 (April 1987): 82.

85. Woods, "Timurid Historiography," p. 82.

86. *Ibid.*

87. *Ibid.*, p. 85 ff., for a detailed discussion of the way in which these manuscripts were used by later Timurid historians for political and ideological purposes.

88. Nizamuddin Shami was in the service of the Jalayirid Shaykh Uways in 1393, when he first met Timur after the warlord's capture of Baghdad. He did not enter Timur's service, however, until 1400, when Timur's forces conquered Aleppo. (Woods, "Timurid Historiography," p. 85).

89. *Ibid.*

90. For a list of the extant fifteenth-century copies of Shami's *Zafarnama*, see Eleanor Sims, "The Garrest Manuscript of the Zafar-Nama: A Study in Fifteenth-Century Timurid Patronage," Ph. D. diss. (Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1973), pp. 63, 68–73.

91. British Library, Or 13297.

92. The decree was issued on 25 August 1411. See Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," p. 30.

93. *Ibid.*, p. 31.



Shahrukh and the Princely Network

THERE CAN BE little doubt that the pivotal event for Timurid fortunes in the fifteenth century was the death of Timur at Utrar on February 18, 1405, when in the words of Ibn Arabshah, "He was carried to the cursing and punishment of God."¹ Brought to a sudden and inglorious halt was the grand campaign against Ming China. In an attempt to keep the death a secret (to allow time for Timur's chosen heir, Pir-Muhammad, to return to Samarqand), the body, perfumed with rose water, musk, and camphor, was quietly dispatched to the capital in the dead of night under the pretext that it was one of Timur's wives or concubines. There is considerable disagreement among the sources on the exact sequence of events, but it appears that five days later the body arrived at Samarqand and was deposited in the Gur-i Amir.

News of Timur's death quickly spread through the city, fueled by the unresolved question of succession. In this emotional atmosphere the Timurid princes and amirs who converged on the capital were refused entry to the city. Only a small coterie of widows, princesses, and the few princes who had managed to accompany them performed the customary nomadic mourning rites over the body: scratching their cheeks, throwing themselves on the ground, heaping ashes upon their heads, and veiling themselves with felt.

More formal rites took place one month later when the Timurid prince and contender for the throne Khalil-Sultan visited the tomb during his military occupation of the city. The ceremonies included not only the Timurid elite and high state officials but the city's entire population, all wearing mourning black. In addition to the customary Islamic funerary practices of distributing alms and reading the Koran, horses, bulls, and rams were slaughtered for several days in succession to feast the throngs. An extraordinary ceremony occurred later in the tomb: "Timur's own drum was brought in with weeping, the sounds of its beats mingling with the cries of mourning. Its skin was then slashed into ribbons, so that it might serve no other master."²

cat. no. 21

"Baysunghur ibn Shahrukh Seated in a Garden" (detail)
From a *Kalila u Dimna* of Nizamuddin
Abu'l-Ma'ali Nasrullah
Herat, dated A.H. Muharram 811
(A.D. October 1429)
ff. 1b-2a

The prince then made further provisions for Timur's tomb:

{Khalil-Sultan} scattered over [Timur's] tomb his garments of silk and hung from the wall his weapons and equipment, which were all adorned with gems and gold and embroidered and decked with so much art that even the meanest of them equalled the income of a country. . . . He also hung star-candles of gold and silver in the sky of the ceilings and spread over the couch of the tomb a coverlet of silk and embroidery up to its sides and borders. Of the candles one was gold, weighing four thousand *mithqals*. . . . Then he appointed for [the] tomb readers of the Koran and servants. . . . [Later] when kings pass[ed] it, they prostrate[d] themselves to show honour and often dismount[ed] from their beasts to honour him and do reverence.¹

For the Timurids these ceremonies would signal their passage from one world to another.

Timur's death set into motion a complex series of

by his replacing the traditional leadership of the Chaghatay *ulus* with a new, nontribal ruling elite whose power was based entirely on their relationship to him. The bitter wars of succession that followed his demise left a political order of a different nature, incapable of expanding or even maintaining the dynasty's claims to territory and sovereignty in the absence of his colossal personal authority and charisma.

One particularly volatile element contributing to much of the ensuing conflict was the relationship between the Timurid princes—the sons and grandsons of Timur—and the amirs. Installed by Timur as governors in cities and outposts throughout the empire, the princes and their sizable troop contingents constituted powerful units, which represented potential threats to Timur's sovereignty. During Timur's reign their ability to act independently and to challenge imperial rule had been effectively countered by the warlord's amirs. Ostensibly assigned to the princes to serve them, these commanders frequently had had considerable political and military resources at their disposal. Trusted mem-

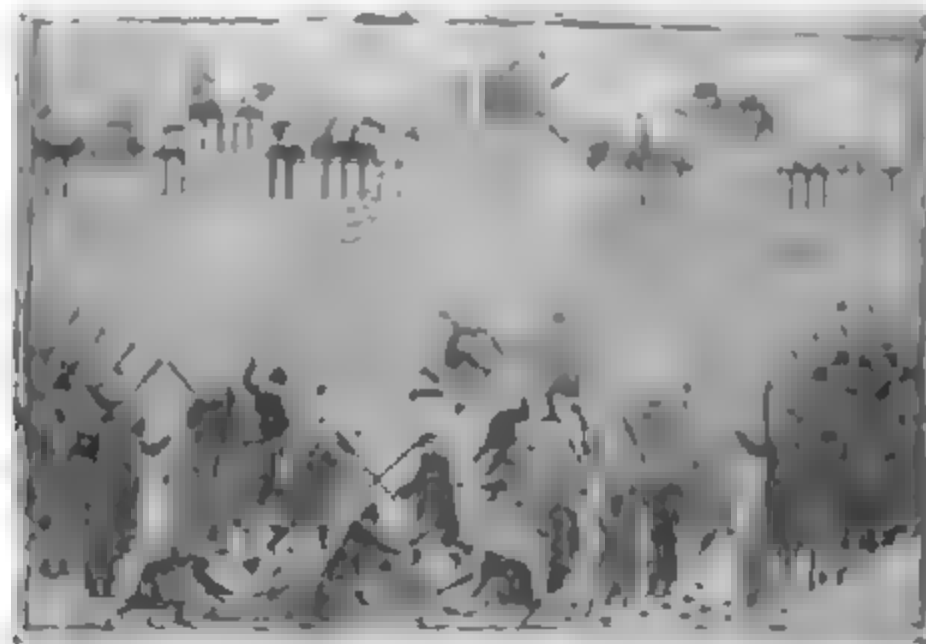


fig. 14

"Khalil-Sultan ibn Miran-shah at the Wall," Samarqandi?, c. 1401–18, opaque watercolor on paper, 36 x 54 cm (14 1/8 x 21 1/8 in.), Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, H. 2152, f. 59b

political and ideological clashes within the dynasty that determined the form and development of Timurid political and cultural life in Iran and Central Asia for the remainder of their rule. At the very center of this rupture was the administration that Timur had established during his lifetime. The collapse of the government after his death had been structurally assured

by his replacing the traditional leadership of the Chaghatay *ulus* with a new, nontribal ruling elite whose power was based entirely on their relationship to him.

The amirs' presence as "guardians," together with the central government's continual interference in provincial affairs,⁴ had severely curtailed the princes' rebelliousness until Timur's death. With his death a number of princes sought to assert their claims to the

throne; the amirs, however, were no longer bound to a central authority and reverted to the traditional practices of the Chaghatay ulus, switching allegiances and pursuing their own ambitions.

Compounding this fragmentation was Timur's partitioning of the realm during his lifetime among his male descendants. This Turkic practice in effect established four separate theaters of war. In Azerbaijan the Timurid prince Miran Shah and his two sons, Abu Bakr and Umar, fought among themselves and without success against the Qaraqoyunlu (the Black Sheep Turcoman confederation), whom Timur had never completely subdued; both the Jalayirid and the Qaraqoyunlu dynasties quickly regained much of their old territories, the latter retaking Azerbaijan in 1408.⁵ In the Iranian province of Fars, the three sons of Umar-Shaykh fought each other from different cities, while in Khurasan Shahrukh, who had governed there since 1396/97, contended with local dynasties as well as rebellious amirs. In Transoxiana Khalil-Sultan was opposed by Pir-Muhammad and a number of amirs.

At first opportunity this large cast of aspirants made the traditional Muslim declarations of sovereignty, ordering coins struck and the *khutba* read in their names. After an amir murdered Pir-Muhammad in 1407, however, the struggle for the throne soon narrowed to Shahrukh and his nephew Khalil-Sultan. The latter quickly seized Samarqand and the treasury, and "like the April rain, nay like the mines of Badakhshan and the sea of Oman, scattered silver and jewels over soldiers and subjects."⁶ In addition to squandering nearly all of Timur's considerable treasure in this fruitless attempt to buy loyalty, Khalil-Sultan took the unprecedented action of giving to a Timurid prince the title and authority of *khan*, an honor that Timur had always assigned to a Chingizid.⁷

While Khalil-Sultan fought his many rivals (fig. 24), Shahrukh met a series of challenges in the Iranian provinces of Khurasan, Mazanderan, and Sistan, where his response to desertions and rebellions by his amirs from 1405 to 1410, like that of any Timurid prince, was swift: punishment or execution tempered by occasional forgiveness. The Timurid princes' conspicuous lack of success in winning obedience only underscores the towering personal authority enjoyed by Timur during his reign. In the absence of bonds of fealty and the lure of endless booty and glory from conquest, financial

considerations now emerged as the primary dictate of loyalty among the army and the amirs, and contemporary sources stress the importance of money for all princely aspirants to power.⁸ The *soyurghal*, a tax-exempt land grant, was awarded to amirs and local rulers in exchange for the services of their troops; Shahrukh used this device to great effect, though it had been rarely employed under Timur.⁹

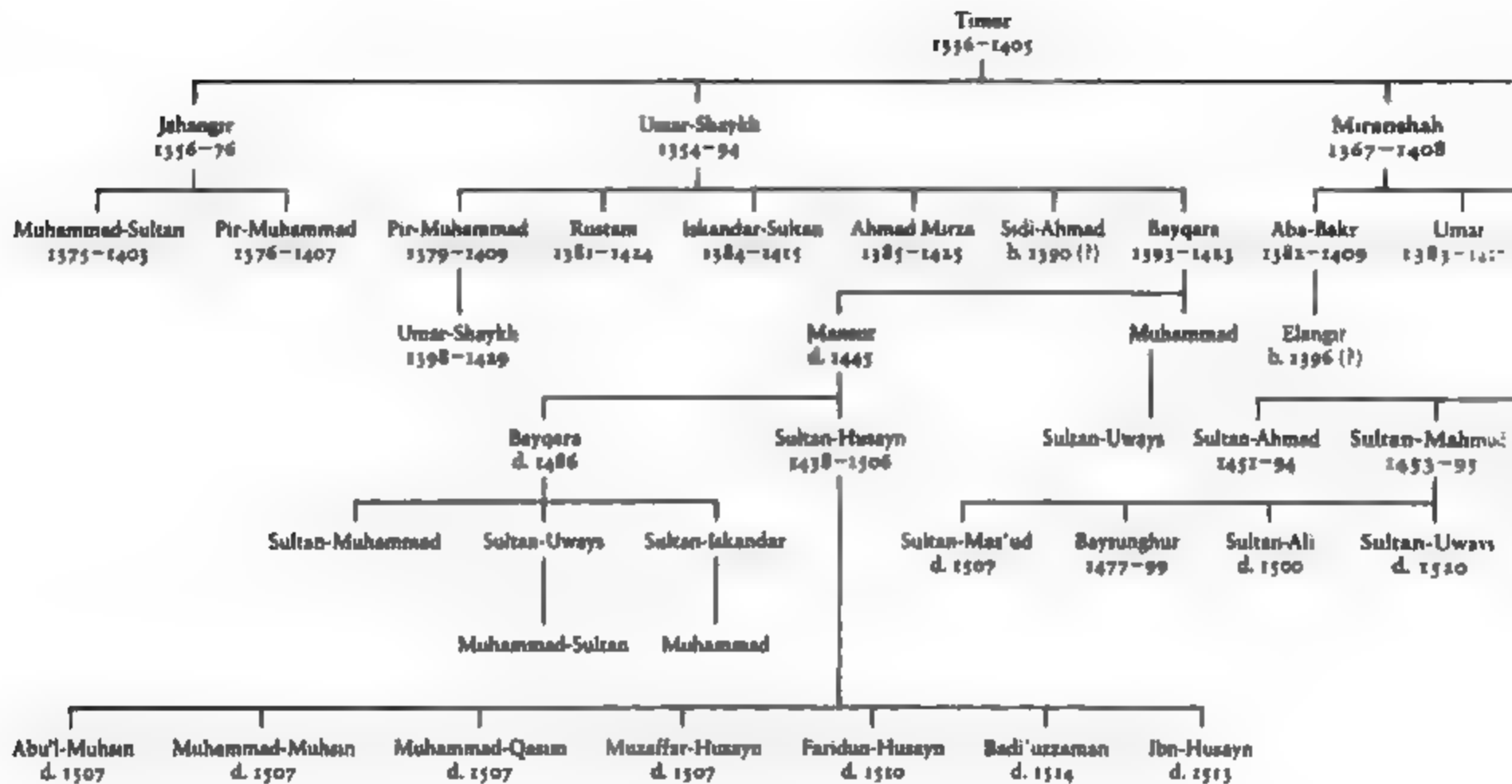
Despite some success in battle Khalil-Sultan was eventually defeated by desertions and the opposition of Timur's old amirs. The "victory-bearing banners" of Shahrukh crossed the Oxus, and the prince entered his father's capital on May 13, 1409, where he installed his son Ulugh-Beg as governor and immediately took steps to consolidate his realm. The state he formed had little resemblance to the steppe empire created by Timur; a different set of political relationships emerged. While the princes essentially had been vassals to Timur, under the nominal leadership of Shahrukh they established themselves as sovereigns, "pearls from a royal sea and manifestations of divine grace."¹⁰

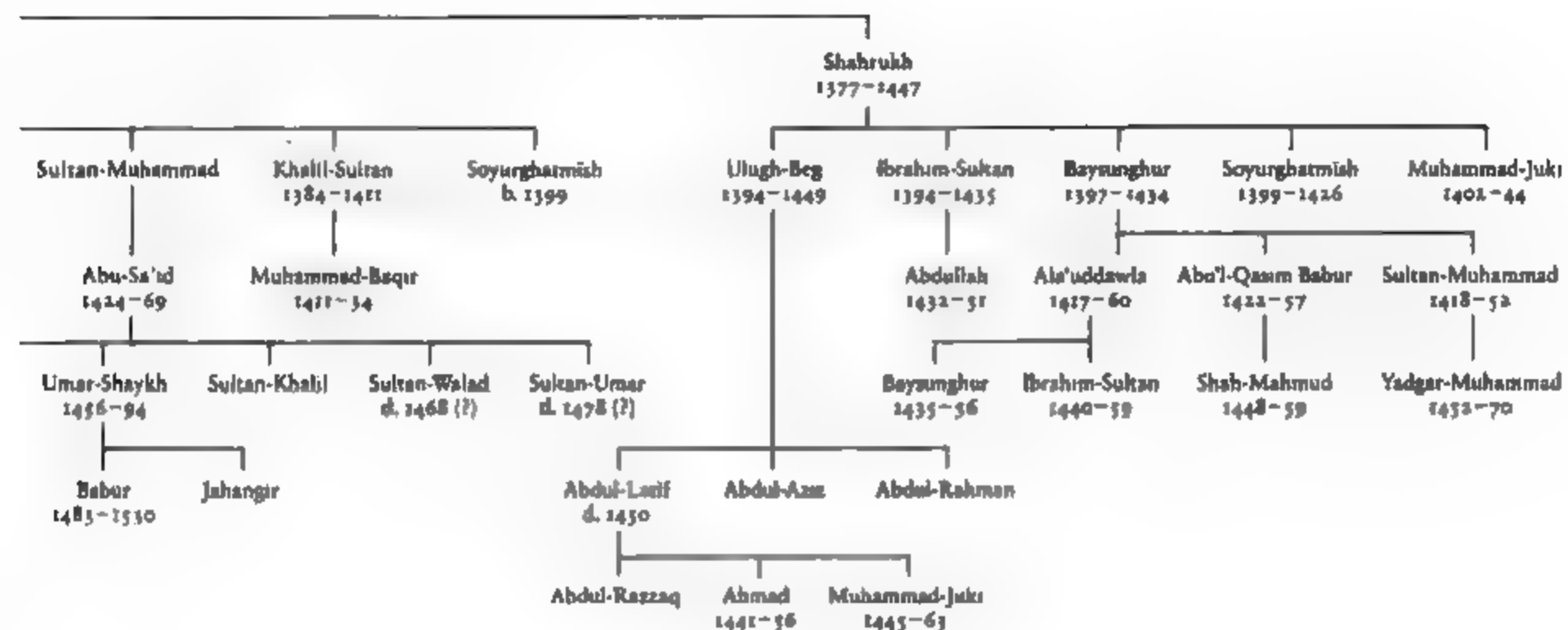
The centrifugal tendencies unleashed by these changes ensured that Shahrukh's authority would continue to be challenged throughout his reign. Unable to mobilize widespread support with the lure of imperial conquest, as Timur had so successfully done, the Timurids under Shahrukh no longer mounted ambitious campaigns striking at long distances across Asia. Instead they struggled to preserve dynastic coherence and the territorial integrity of their kingdom.

Shahrukh's long reign (r. 1405–47) can be characterized as one of tenuous stability, with Shahrukh at times recognized as little more than a beleaguered figurehead unable to compete with the rapidly mythologized legacy of his father.¹¹ Yet one of the remarkable ironies of Shahrukh's rule is that his alleged military and political failures stand in striking contrast to the artistic brilliance of the princely courts that flourished during his rule, courts whose dynamic patronage and cultural achievements would serve as revered royal models for contemporary and later dynasties in the eastern Islamic world (cat. no. 18). The history of the Timurid dynasty is also a history of its arts: artistic production was so closely intertwined with political, social, and economic events that they must be discussed together. The changed circumstances and orientation of the dynasty after Timur's death served as

The House of Timur

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This genealogical chart, based on a more complete version found in Wheeler Thackston, *A Century of Princes. Sources in Timurid History and Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, in press), focuses on those princes who played important political and cultural roles in the history of the dynasty.





cat. no. 18

Illuminated frontispiece from a *Duran*
 of Amir Khusrav Dhlawi
 Shiraz, dated A.H. 834 A.D. 1430 31
 B. 16-17

CAT. NO. 19 (opposite)

Folio from a Koran
Iran, c. 1400–1450
f. 38b

74

a direct impetus for an accelerated cultural program.

The transformation of a battle-hardened and rapacious Turkic military class into a celebrated princely cult of patronage reflected the dynasty's shifting priorities. As the regime was no longer based on the personal control of a steppe leader whose charisma was consciously linked to Chinghiz Khan and the glories of the Mongol empire, the interests of the new aristocracy were pursued primarily within the context of urban Islam in Iran and Central Asia. One of the central issues facing Timurid rule was the need, as foreign Turkic conquerors, to establish themselves as legitimate rulers in the Iranian monarchical tradition. The old steppe symbols of legitimacy, such as the *yasa* and the linkage with Mongol aristocracy, were of diminished value in a predominantly urban Persianate culture.

Islamic legitimating principles and institutions began to replace nomadic ideals, kinship ties, and personal loyalties. The transfer of the capital to Herat, long a center of Iranian Islamic urban civilization, helped confirm the dynasty's new orientation. Shahrukh dispensed with the installation of a Mongol shadow khan in the new capital and did not adopt the title *kürāgān* (son-in-law), which was favored by some of his sons and grandsons; instead he assumed only the traditional Islamic title of sultan, a designation with no specific Mongol connotation. Also Shahrukh, unlike his father, did not marry any of his sons to princesses of the family of Chingiz Khan despite his own marriage to a Chingizid princess. The overture to Islam can even be detected in the immediate aftermath of Timur's death, when Pir-Muhammad was advised by one faction of his officers to sever himself from Mongol tradition and seek instead from the Abbasid shadow caliph of Egypt a diploma of investiture, which would support his claim.¹³

In the best tradition of Islamic rule public piety and adherence to Muslim law were asserted as official policies of the ruling house,¹⁴ as evidenced by the lavish patronage of religious manuscripts (cat. nos. 19–20). An extravagant program of architectural patronage sponsored by Shahrukh and his wife, Gawharshad (d. 1457), confirmed the Timurid commitment to religion with the construction of numerous mosques, *madrasas*, and shrines.

Still vital, however, were the powerful Turco-

OVER EAD
CAT. NO. 19

Illuminated frontispiece from a Koran
Iran, c. 1400–1450
ff. 1b–2a

فَاذْفَعْتُ الزَّيْرَ اَمْوَالَهُ فَاَشْرَيْتُهَا

وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ حَسِيبًا لِلزَّجَالِ نَصِيبُ

مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ

نَصِيبٌ مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ مِمَّا

قَلَّ مِنْهُ أَوْ كَثُرُ نَصِيبًا مَفْرُوضًا

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي
أَنْشَأَ لَنَا هَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لَهُ
نَايِلِينَ
إِنَّ رَبَّنَا لَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُ
مُبْرَأٌ مِنْهُمْ وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ
لَا يُبْصِرُونَ
وَلَهُمْ أَسْمَاعٌ لَا تَسْمَعُ
وَلَهُمْ آفَافٌ لَا تُحِصُونَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله الذي جعل
الحسن والحسين
كل الامم احرارا

الحمد لله الذي جعل



Mongol beliefs that had carried the dynasty to power, and steppe ideals continued to be upheld alongside Islamic ones. Samarqand under Ulugh-Beg remained particularly fertile ground for these interests, presumably with Shahrukh's approval or tolerance. The appeal that nomadic Chingizid elements maintained for much of the dynasty's ruling and military elite affected artistic patronage, as both urban Islamic and steppe traditions interacted in Timurid art throughout the century at different levels of patronage.

Unlike earlier invaders, such as the Mongols, the

early Timurids were hardly strangers to the Persianate cultural complex. At the very least they were familiar with and employed its forms and conventions, their homelands being situated on the northeastern fringe of the Iranian Islamic world. During Timur's lifetime the ruling house showed a lively interest in artistic patronage, particularly its more public and grandiose aspects. By the time of his death Timurid nobles were serious participants in the dialogue that informed cultural life in the eastern Islamic world. This involvement was a reflection of the royal house's new needs



cat. no. 20

Illuminated frontispiece from a Quran
Iran, c. 1425-50
lf. 1b, 2a

and attitudes, which were effectively articulated by the artists and craftsmen Timur had brought to Samarkand. The mingling of artists from different regions of the Islamic world had combined with the nascent cultural imperatives of the dynasty to instill the formative stages of Timurid art with an unmistakable sense of searching and experimentation; that moment, however, was soon supplanted by the new and highly confident aesthetic order associated with Shahrukhid rule.

Shahrukh's appointment of the princes, mainly his

sons, as governors in cities across the realm may have, in the absence of Timur's personal authority, encouraged political independence, but it also simultaneously triggered a cultural decentralization and efflorescence. Instead of following Timur's practice of concentrating patronage in the capital, the dynasty now saw the princes' courts blossom as artistic centers, vying with each other for artists and poets who would bring them pleasure, honor, and prestige.

Although Shahrukh and Gawharshad both made significant cultural contributions through their build-

ing projects, the primary force behind the new artistic patronage was the network of princes installed throughout the realm, many of whom had been reared in the heady imperial atmosphere of power and ceremony at Timur's Samarqand. Their commitment to urban cultural pursuits was not, as has often been implied, their sole activity;¹⁴ the official chronicles of the period make clear that political, economic, and military matters were their most persistent concerns, but Timurid art and patronage are related to these contemporary issues. Its carefully contrived forms, conventions, and spirit stand as potent reflections of Timurid aspirations (cat. no. 21). The cultural programs and interests of the princes encouraged a direct relationship between art and Timurid ideology; they commissioned works that bolstered their reputations, fed rivalries, and ultimately established new standards for the visual arts in the eastern Islamic world.

Six very different royal personalities, for whom there are varying amounts of biographical information and attributable works of art, helped shape this new Timurid program: Shahrukh, Gawharshad, and Bay-sunghur (1397–1434) at Herat; Iskandar-Sultan (1384–1415) and Ibrahim-Sultan (1394–1435) in Fars; and Ulugh-Beg at Samarqand. The implications of royal artistic patronage during the first half of the fifteenth century can best be assessed against the background of Shahrukh's actions as ruler, since princely activities were sensitive to the sultan's policies and can be viewed as responses to the often conflicting attitudes and tastes coexisting in the ruling house.

Unlike his father, Shahrukh ruled the Timurid empire, not as a Turco-Mongol warlord-conqueror, but as an Islamic sultan. In dynastic chronicles he is exalted as a man of great piety, diplomacy, and modesty—a model Islamic ruler who repaired much of the physical and psychological damage caused by his father.¹⁵ Often disparaged for his perceived deficiencies as a leader, he nonetheless exhibited considerable political and military skills in his surprising seizure of the throne after Timur's death. His success in extending his sphere of influence included other princes and rulers, as evidenced by the sole presence of his name on Timurid coinage and in the *khutba* during his reign.¹⁶ His early years had been spent as a loyal son—he participated in his father's military campaigns as far west as Palestine and successfully governed Khurasan from the age of

nineteen—yet Timur apparently did not consider him as a possible heir-apparent. Evidence suggests that Timur did not favor the prince because of the status of his mother, Taghai Tarkan Agha, a slave-concubine.¹⁷

After his seizure of power in 1409 Shahrukh moved quickly to establish the ideological foundations of his rule, repositioning the dynasty more squarely within an Islamic urban framework. This entailed the projection and dissemination to the indigenous population and the *ulema* (religious classes) of a more acceptable image of the Timurid house, and a key element in this policy was a systematic program of religious piety implemented by public and personal displays of zeal and devotion on the part of the dynasty. Their approach seems to have been ecumenical, with no sharp distinction made between Sunni and Shiite preferences.¹⁸ The sultan's professed adherence to the *shari'a* (religious law), verging on bigotry, was given special emphasis. Reflections of this policy can be found in both contemporary and later Timurid accounts: "Shahrukh Sultan, through perfect religious observance, purity of innate nature and good moral characteristics, has reached the station of sainthood and is aware of things hidden [in other dimensions]. Sainly miracles are related of him."¹⁹

Shahrukh scrupulously followed religious observances and vigorously prosecuted those who partook of pleasures condemned by Islamic law. He expected members of the dynasty to conform to these standards, though these measures were not always followed. As late as 1440 Shahrukh personally accompanied the *muhtasibs* (censors of public morals) of Herat to the wine cellars in the houses of his son Muhammad-Juki (d. 1444) and his grandson Ala'uddawla (1417–60) to supervise the disposal of wine—a virtual family addiction—which is forbidden by the Koran.²⁰ These ostentatious displays of piety reinforced Shahrukh's image of devotion to the *shari'a* at the expense of the Chingizid *yasa*. In a letter to the Chinese emperor in 1412/13 Shahrukh explicitly professed his extermination of Chingizid law and his enforcement of the *shari'a*.²¹ Ibn Arabshah, for one, was less convinced:

It is said . . . that Shahrukh repealed the laws and customs of Genghiz Khan and ordained that they should make his rule flow along the streams of the law of Islam, but this I do not consider true, since it



OVERLEAF
CAT. NO. 21

Illuminated frontispiece from a *Kalila wa Dimna* of Nizamuddin Abu'l Ma'ali Nasrullah Herat, dated A.H. Muharram 811 (A.D. October 1419) ff. 2b-1a

fig. 24

Dedicatory inscription on the sanctuary mihrab of the *masjid-i jum'* of Gawharshad, designed by Baysunghur ibn Shahrugh Mashhad, 1418 Tile mosaic

is considered among them as the purest religion and true faith and if it happened that he should summon his chief men and doctors to his palace and closing the doors look upon them from his throne and propose to them anything of this sort, truly they would flee like asses to the gate.²¹

Whatever the attitude of individual members of the Timurid dynasty toward Islam, the royal house sought to buttress its appearance of religious piety through an ambitious program that included personal titles, formal proclamations, and public activities. Even military actions were frequently sanctioned by traditional Islamic means; during the Timurid reconquest of

Tabriz from the Qaraqoyunlu dynasty in 1420, Shahrugh ordered Koran reciters, who were in constant attendance to him, to recite the Victory *sura* (chapter) twelve thousand times.²¹

Individual exercises in piety by Shahrugh's family members were also conspicuous evidence of dynastic commitment. In 1418 Baysunghur designed a monumental dedicatory inscription (fig. 25) for the main *mihrab* (open vaulted porch) of the mosque at Mashhad built by his mother, Gawharshad. Executed in an elegant white *thuluth* script over a dark blue ground and amber spiral scroll, it quotes both from the Koran and the *hadith* (traditions of the Prophet), asking acceptance of and reward for the queen's efforts on behalf of





devout worshippers.⁴⁴ Baysunghur's brother Ibrahim-Sultan executed pious inscriptions on two madrasas he founded in Shiraz—the Dar al-Safa (House of Purity) and Dar al-Aytam (House of Orphans)—and at least five Korans by his own hand survive (cat. no. 22). He is reported to have copied a sixth, a giant Koran that he allegedly gave as *waqf* (pious donation) to the cemetery of Baba Lutfullah Imaduddin in Shiraz.⁴⁵ Impressive among the numerous public displays of piety by a third brother, Ulugh-Beg, who was also reputed to have memorized the Koran with all seven variant readings,⁴⁶ is his commission of an enormous Koran stand (fig. 26), lavishly carved in relief with inscriptions and rich arabesques that resemble the decoration of leather book bindings of the period; it still can be seen in the courtyard of the Friday mosque in Samarqand, where he governed.⁴⁷

Architectural projects, frequently of imposing scale, were clearly the most potent means of disseminating the public religious policy of the dynasty. In his 1412/13 letter to the Chinese emperor Shahrukh stated that the ruler is ordered by God to build in every district mosques, madrasas, *khanaqahs*, *sauami* (monasteries), and *ma'abid* (places of worship) to further religious sciences and the faith.⁴⁸ Most of Shahrukh's and Gawharshad's important commissions—his now-vanished madrasa and khanaqah (1410) at Herat, his additions to the Shrine of Abdullah Ansari (1425–29) at Gazargah, her mosque (1416–18) at Mashhad, and her mosque and madrasa ensemble (1417–38) at Herat (known as the Musalla since the nineteenth century)—were indeed religious in nature⁴⁹ and effectively consolidated aesthetic concerns with religious and political objectives.



Cat. no. 22

Koran
Shiraz, dated A.H. 4 Ramadan 810
(A.D. 29 June 1412)



fig. 26

A view stand for the *maṣṣad* (room
of prayer)
Samarqand, c. 1405–49
Stone
1.10 x 2.00 x 1.90 m (3'6" x 6'6" x 6'3")



fig. 28

Interior of the madrasa of Gawharshad
Herat, c. 1433

fig. 27 (opposite)

Wall panel of the Shrine of Abdulah
Ansari (detail)
Gazargah, c. 1425–29
Tile mosaic and glazed brick (kashi)

A new, breathtakingly complex, and theatrical architecture transformed the landscape of Khurasan during Shahrukh's reign (fig. 27).¹⁰ Under the direction of the leading court architect, Qiwamuddin Zaynuddin of Shiraz, a number of formal and decorative elements—the cruciform mosque plan, the embellishment of the minaret, tile and marble decorative schemes—were imported into eastern Iran; a new aesthetic of space, based on an ingenious system of proportions and geometric progressions, made possible the dramatic vaulting systems and soaring domes that characterize Timurid architecture. For example, the Timurids used intersecting vaulting arches that featured rhythmic sequences of arch, kite, and rib pendentives. These combined with domes to produce a sweeping, upward motion that animated interior space (fig. 28). The geometric basis of Timurid architectural and design principles was also implemented in architectural decoration, as the dynasty sheathed entire structures in angled patterns of brilliant colors. These schemes were incorporated into secular structures as well as religious ones.



fig. 29

Ruins of the mosque and madrasa
("masalla") of Gawharshad, including
the minarets of the madrasa of
Sultan-Husayn Mirza (right)
Herat, c. 1417–18

An imposing example of these royal architectural ambitions was Gawharshad's enormous complex consisting of a mosque and madrasa situated on the northern outskirts of Herat and now almost entirely destroyed (fig. 29). The mosque was dominated by an entrance portal of some eighty feet and four towering minarets at the corners of its unusually large court, which was designed to accommodate crowds from

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله الذي هدانا لهذا
ما كنا لنهتدي لولا أن هدانا الله

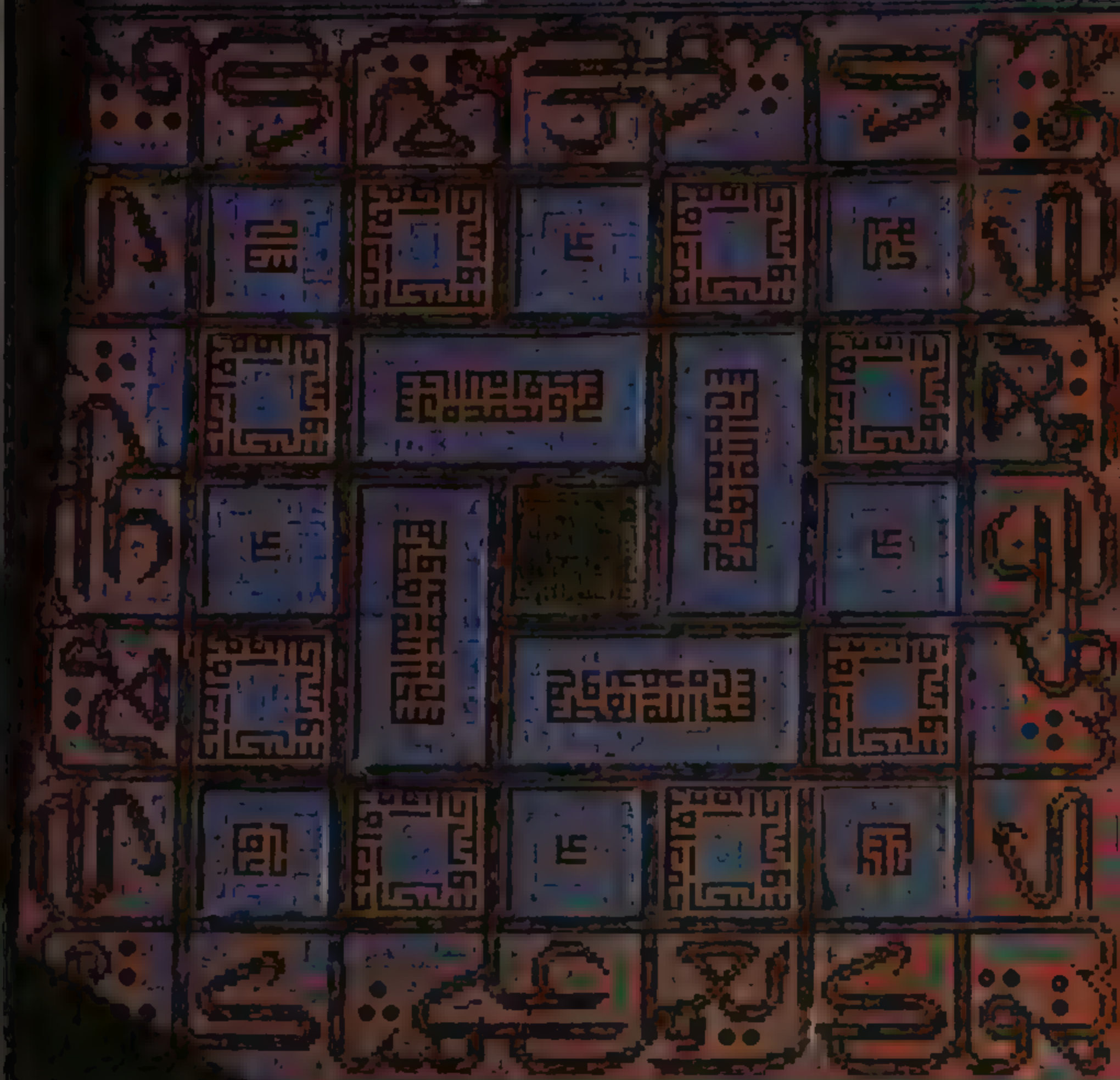




fig. 31 (opposite)

Mausoleum dome of the *madrasa* of
Gawharshad (detail)
Herat, c. 1492

fig. 30

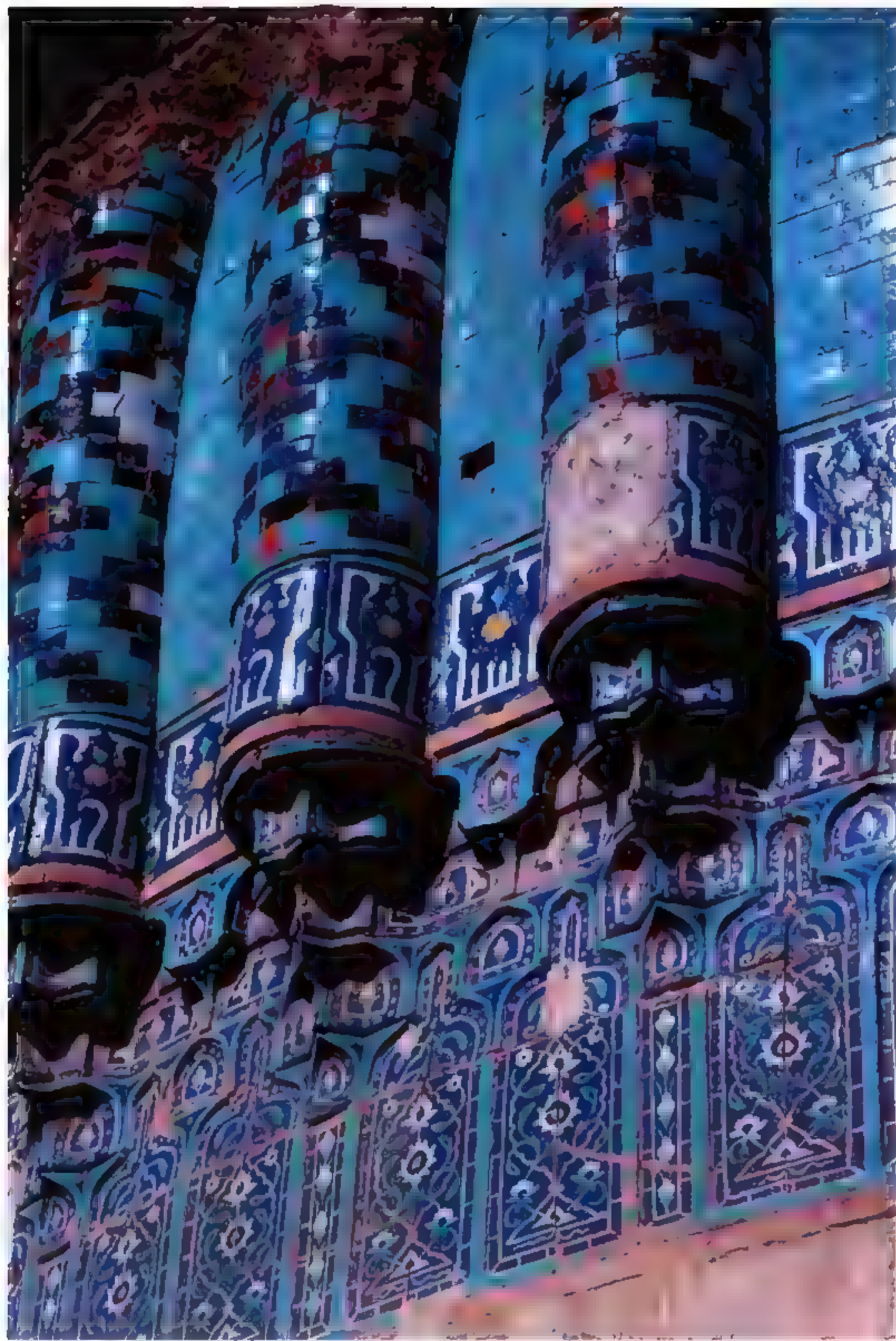
Minaret at the *madrasa* of Gawharshad
(detail)
Herat, c. 1492

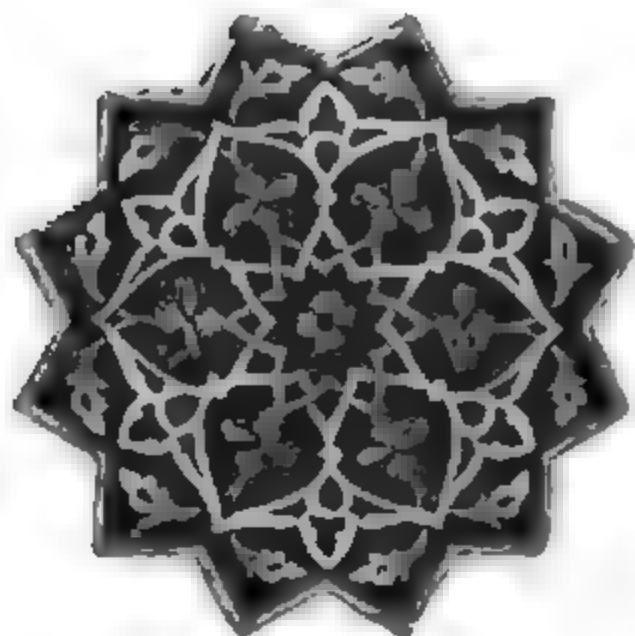
the city and outlying districts. All that remains of the *madrasa* are an elegantly tapered minaret—covered with carved marble and polychrome tile mosaic (fig. 30), a new feature in Timurid architecture—and the western dome chamber, which served as a dynastic mausoleum for several members of the ruling house, including Gawharshad (fig. 31).¹¹

Shahrukh devoted most of his architectural energies to the creation and embellishment of popular religious shrines. Like his father he was a frequent visitor to these monuments. Both Sunni and Shiite sites were

patronized, and pre-Timurid personages were accorded special favor; not only did Shahrukh and Gawharshad augment existing complexes like the Shrine of Imam Riza at Mashhad, the tomb of Abdullah Ansari at Gazargah near Herat (fig. 32), and the newly “discovered” shrine at Mazar-i Sharif, but his ministers followed suit, building pious foundations at Khargird (cat. no. 23) and Turbat-i Shaykh Jam among others.¹²

One of the major pilgrimage centers during the first half of the fifteenth century was the shrine of the Shiite Imam Riza at Mashhad (fig. 25). Popular since the





cat. no. 83

Tile from the Ghiyathriyya Madrasa
Khargird, c. 1444

tenth century, it was greatly expanded and second only to the capital in terms of architectural patronage. It was perceived by many as a holy city, perhaps viewed as a partial substitute for the *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca), an important religious obligation for which the Timurids showed a curious disinterest.³³ Hardly lost upon the dynasty would have been the economic boom attendant upon the rise of such a shrine, particularly given the strategic location of Mashhad on major trade routes.

Architectural programs that bolstered the dynasty's public image and religious commitments were also preoccupations of other Timurid princes and princesses. But only Ulugh-Beg at the old capital of Samarkand rivaled his father and grandfather as a builder (fig. 33). This activity contributed to his image as more an independent sovereign than a provincial governor; during his reign Samarkand was further embellished, with the prince overseeing the reorientation of the Shah-i Zinda shrine complex and additions to his grandfather's tomb at the Gur-i Amir. His crowning achievement was undoubtedly the large ornamental central square known as the Registan (Place of Sand), the first of its kind in Islamic urban planning and originally surrounded by a madrasa, mosque, khanaqah, and caravansary (fig. 34). A later Timurid and the founder of the Mughal dynasty in India, Babur (d. 1530), described the site in his memoirs:

Amongst Ulugh-Beg Mirza's buildings inside the town are a college and a monastery (*khangah*). The dome of the monastery is very large, few so large are known in the world. Near the two buildings, he constructed an excellent Hot Bath (*hammam*) known as the Mirza's Bath; he had the pavements in this made of all sorts of stone (? mosaic); such another bath is

not known in Khurasan or Samarkand. . . . To the south of the college is his mosque, known as the Masjid-i maqata (Carved Mosque) because its ceiling and its walls are covered with *islami* (traditional Islamic design pattern) and Chinese pictures formed of segments of wood.³⁴

Of the buildings described, only the madrasa (fig. 35) has survived. It is an exuberant proclamation of Islamic learning and piety. Built between 1417 and 1420, it attracted some of the greatest scholars of the age in both the religious and secular sciences. Rivaling Timur's monuments in scale and complex in plan, this

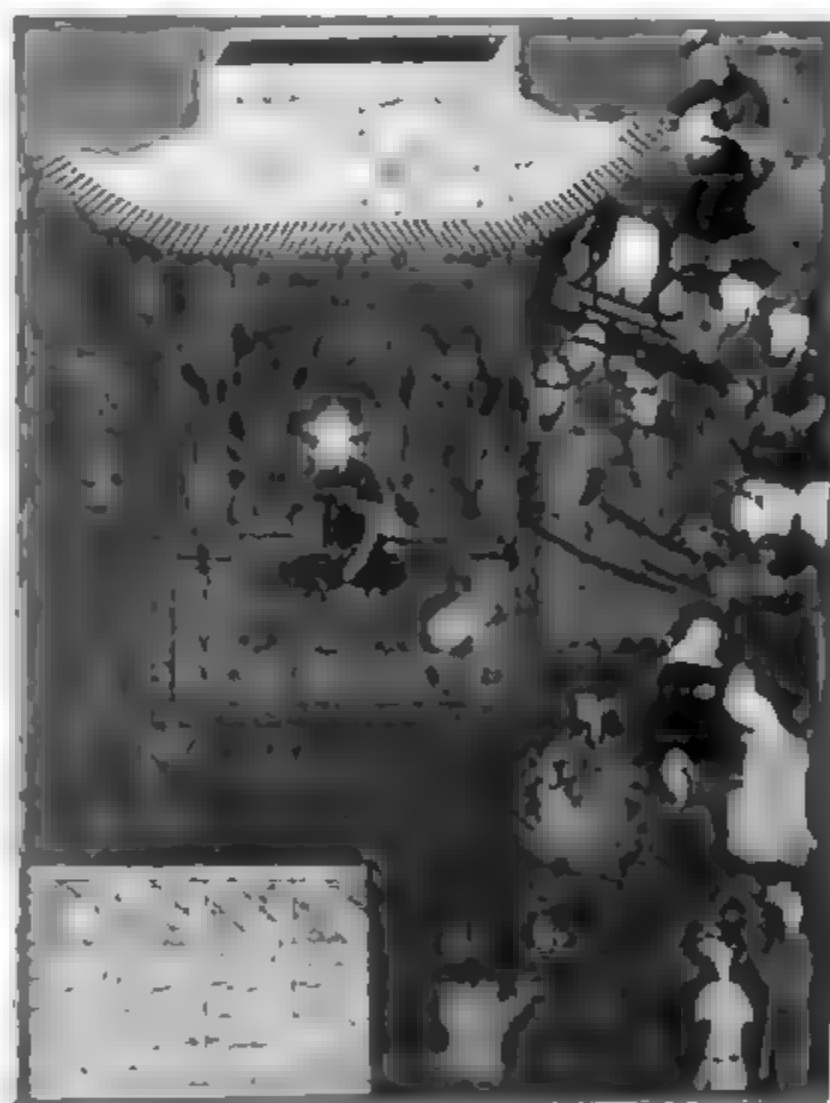


fig. 33

"Ulugh-Beg ibn Shahrukh Seated
on a Carpet"
Right half of a double-page painting
from a lost manuscript
Samarkand, c. 1400
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
31.8 x 24.1 cm (12 1/2 x 9 1/2 in.)
Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institu-
tion, Freer Gallery of Art, no. 46.26

fig. 34

Wall panel of the Shrine of Abdullah
Ansari (detail)
Gazargah, c. 1425-29
Tile mosaic and brick





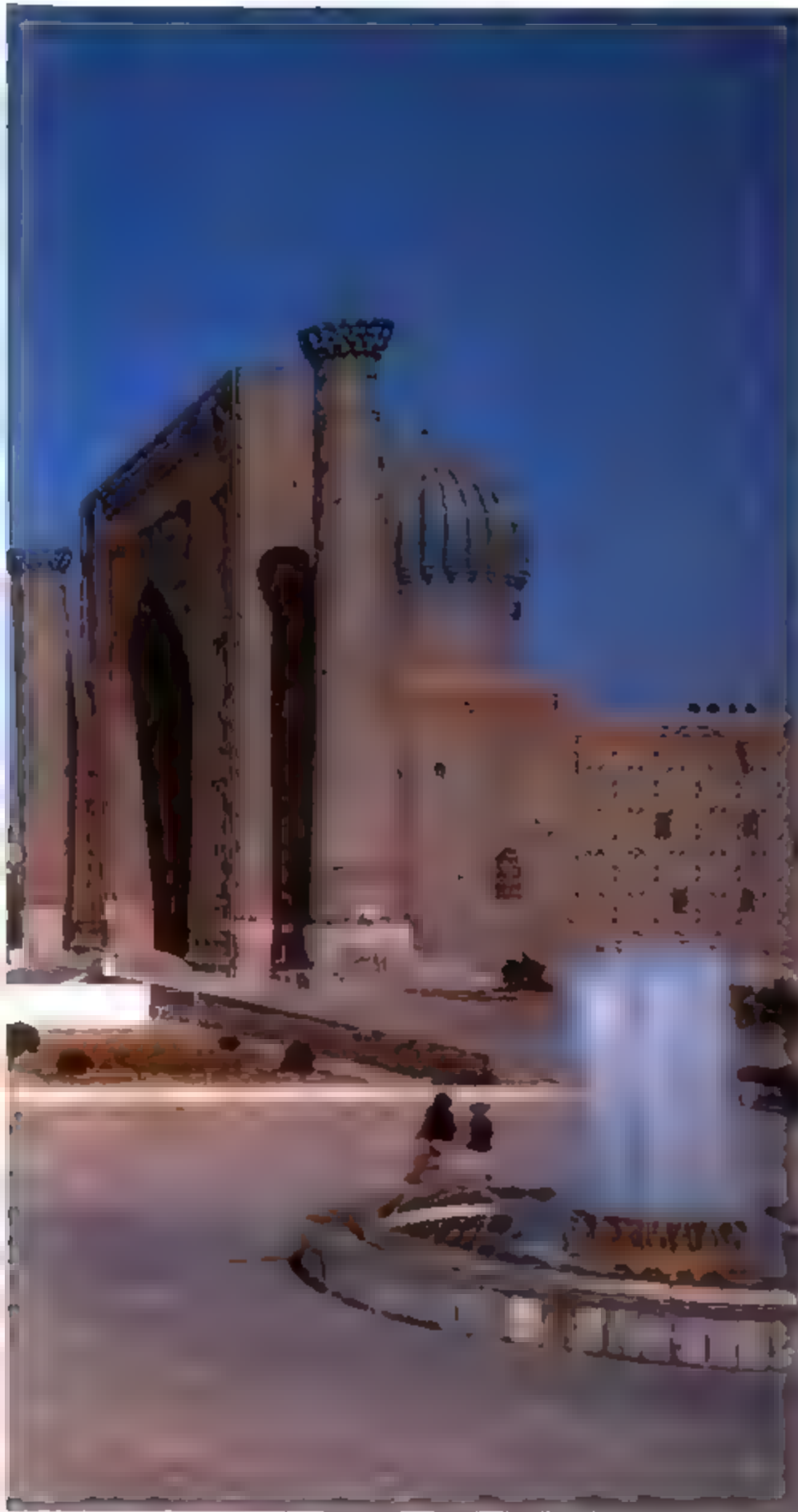


fig. 34

Registan, Samarkand

impressive structure is laid out on the four-*iwan* plan; living quarters are in the two stories behind the *iwans*, and domed lecture halls are in the four corners and opposite the entrance portal. Four towering minarets stand at the outside corners of the structure. The entire building is cloaked in a brilliant tapestry of zigzagging compartments and geometric inscriptions. The madrasa's dominant feature, its massive portal screen, is composed of an interlocking grid of polychrome mosaic tile and carved stone inlays (fig. 36, cat. no. 24) and is crowned by a staggering field of shining stars in the spandrels.¹⁵ These glittering tile veneers of geometric and floral ornament are the most distinctive aspect of Timurid architecture. They involved techniques of extravagant expense and labor and resulted from a subtle refinement of earlier designs that emphasized both visual harmony and technical virtuosity.

Despite Shahrukh and the princes' pandering to the Muslim religious establishment, the Timurids still faced sectarian strife and opposition. The early fifteenth century in Iran and Central Asia, like much of the Islamic world, was a time of spiritual ferment, and there arose a variety of heterodox religious movements that were expressions of political and social discontent.¹⁶ Their practices embraced strong and pervasive elements of popular Islam with its numerous manifestations of overt piety such as the veneration of saints, pilgrimages, and a belief in miracles. These groups, frequently espousing Shiism in conjunction with Sufism, were particularly worrisome for the sultan, as they frequently resorted to violence. For example, Shahrukh survived an assassination attempt in Herat on February 21, 1427: while leaving the mosque after Friday prayers, he was stabbed in the stomach by a member of the Hurufiyya sect who approached under the pretext of offering a petition.¹⁷ Subversive revolts were not uncommon during his reign, and the dynasty's attention to the Shrine of Imam Riza at Mashhad in the form of rich presents and splendid buildings was clearly an effort to mollify the Shiite ulema.¹⁸

These policies had some success, as the Timurid elite and the Persian-speaking ulema coexisted and even collaborated closely at times. In the capital, for example, the military aristocracy had little involvement in the city's affairs, which were supervised by local Persian-speaking viziers without any clan or tribal affiliations.



fig. 15
Madrasa ul Ulugh-Beg ibn Shahrokh,
 Registan
 Samarkand, c. 1417–20

The ulema supplied these viziers to the Timurids as well as staffing the *diwans* (ministries) and madrasas of the city; hence, the ulema ran municipal affairs. While collaboration with a foreign military aristocracy was abhorred by many in the religious classes, those who did so were attached to their patrons in a traditional manner. In turn each Timurid prince was bound to a spiritual preceptor, much as Timur and his father were related by the spiritual and educational ties of *murid* (disciple) and *pir* (Sufi master) to a Transoxianan shaykh.³⁹

The Timurids' religious activity should not always be interpreted as strictly a calculated policy to win support. Some of the princes were apparently genuinely interested in Islamic law and theology. Iskandar-Sultan, for example, an independent and often rebellious

Timurid prince, showed in stark contrast to his aggressive political and military behavior an intense interest in spiritual matters. On at least two occasions he sent to theological adepts written questions on metaphysical issues that piqued his curiosity: What is the nature of love, of the intellect, of angels? Who is Satan? Was the *mi'raj* (Muhammad's nocturnal ascent to heaven) spiritual or physical? Many of his thoughts on these points are contained in the preface of his now-lost *Jami' al-sultani* (Royal chronicles), which has been preserved in a later version.⁴⁰ One of his extant anthologies also contains a commentary on Shiite doctrinal questions as well as an exposition of Sunni creed.⁴¹

In addition Iskandar-Sultan maintained a personal rapport with the celebrated Sufi poet Shah Ni'matullah Wali Kirmans and gave him revenues from the district of Taft to construct a large khanaqah there. After being removed from power, Iskandar led the life of an ascetic and installed himself for a number of months at the Shrine of Imamzada Sahl-i Ali near Isfahan.

Yet despite Iskandar's religious commitments, he maintained close ties through birth, marriage, and per-

sonal relationships with Chingizids and Mughuls.⁴² For example, he sponsored Mawlana Haydar, a poet who wrote in Turki.⁴³ His and other princes' concerted embrace of Islam and its urban traditions was often contradicted by their homage to the legacy of Timur and their Turco-Mongol past. While the potency of the conqueror's contrived Chingizid descent was diminished in the new circumstances of Shahrukhid rule, Timur's personification of the glories of the steppe remained a vital element of dynastic legitimacy. Many Timurid princes consequently recognized the need for an Islamic source of authority, but they sought to reconcile it with steppe ideals. Their memories of Timur's court, their tutelage at the hands of his queens and amirs, and the glory of his conquests instilled in many of them deep bonds with the history and traditions of the Turco-Mongol steppe, which had become tangential to their existence. The allure of this heritage accounted for the conflict among the ruling elite—even Shahrukh himself—between fidelity to the memory and traditions of Timur and the requirements of the



cat. no. 24

Stone inlay from the madrasa of Ulugh-Beg ibn Shahrukh
Samarqand, c. 1417–30

95



fig. 36

Entrance portal and minaret of the madrasa of Ulugh-Beg ibn Shahrukh (detail)
Samarqand, c. 1417–30



empire's new orientation and structure, tensions that resonated throughout their actions as rulers, warriors, and patrons.

Ulugh-Beg best exemplified these contradictions within the royal house. For later Muslim writers he was the model scholar prince, the great royal astronomer, who embodied the urban Islamic tradition of scholarship and erudition:

His late Highness Ulugh-Beg Kūrāgān was a learned, just, victorious, and high-minded king. He attained an exalted degree in astronomy and was quite adept at understanding poetry. During his reign scientists were given the greatest respect, and in his time the position of the learned reached exalted heights. In geometry he pointed out the subtlest things, and in cosmography he unlocked the secrets of the *Almagest*. The learned and wise are agreed that in the history of Islam, nay from the time of Alexander until this moment, there has never reigned a king so wise and learned as Ulugh-Beg Kūrāgān.⁴⁴

But in the eyes of many of his contemporaries Ulugh-Beg was remembered as an ardent upholder of Turco-Mongol traditions. In Samarqand he appointed a Chingizid shadow khan in whose name he issued *yarlights* (decrees). Like Timur he emphasized his link with imperial Mongol charisma by calling himself *kuragan*, a title not borne by Shahrukh or his other sons, which clearly linked Ulugh-Beg to his grandfather.⁴⁵ Much of the religious opposition to Ulugh-Beg can be traced to his maintenance of "infidel" practices, such as his imposition of the *tamgha* tax. This profitable trade and craft tax in the towns was of Mongol origin and considered a violation of Islamic law by the ulema. Shahrukh—the Muslim ruler *par excellence*—also imposed this tax, though he gave it an Islamic veneer by simply declaring it as *zakat* (alms levies).⁴⁶

Ulugh-Beg's Samarqand was considerably less inclined toward the religious austerity prevalent in Herat. This development can perhaps be attributed to Herat's geographical and philosophical distance from

the old capital, where sympathies for the customs associated with Timur lingered. The city Timur had built gained notoriety as a center of feasting and music, particularly famed for its singers, and accusations of impiety were often made by the dervish shaykhs who opposed both Ulugh-Beg and the Shaykh al-Islam, the official head of the Muslim clergy in Samarqand, who supported Ulugh-Beg.⁴⁷

One account from an early sixteenth-century history of Central Asian dervishism relates how Ulugh-Beg celebrated the circumcision of his son Abdul-Aziz by feasts where both nobles and the populace openly drank wine. The muhtasib Sayyid Ashiq entered and told Ulugh-Beg, "You have destroyed the faith of Muhammad and have introduced the customs of infidels."

Ulugh-Beg replied, "You have won fame through your descent from Sayyids and your learning, and have attained old age. Apparently you also wish to attain martyrdom and therefore utter rude words, but I shall not grant you your wish."⁴⁸

Tensions of this nature seem to be largely attributable to Ulugh-Beg's Chingizid sympathies and his apparent reverence for his grandfather. A forceful illustration of this dichotomy between political reality and ethnic allegiance was the large jade tombstone Ulugh-Beg placed over Timur's grave at the Gur-i Amir sometime after 1425. The inscriptions not only affirm the continuing importance of his grandfather's exalted Mongol affiliations but also link him with Ali, the fourth caliph of Islam and the most venerated figure of Shiism.

As the fifteenth century progressed, Timurid rule became characterized by dual patronage and cultural pluralism. No manuscript more tellingly reveals the Timurid's ideological duality than a spectacular copy of the *Mi'rajnama* (Book of the ascent), a rarely illustrated Islamic text copied during Shahrukh's reign probably at Herat for a Timurid patron in Turki (in Uighur script) and Arabic. Its sixty-three illustrations, replete with Buddhist imagery, demonstrate an imaginative power that parallels the text's fantastic tales of Muhammad's journey through Hell and the celestial regions (cat. no. 25).⁴⁹

There are other manuscripts in Uighur script from Herat, and similar works were done even farther west. In 1431 at Yazd an *Anthology* was written in Persian

cat. no. 25

"The Torture Endured by Misers Who Failed to Pay the Tithe"
From a *Mi'rajnama*
Herat(?), c. 1425-50
E. 65a

and Turki (again in Uighur script) for Jalaluddin Firozshah (1407–44), Shahrukh's supreme military commander and a principal exponent of Turkic culture (cat. no. 26).

Another way that the dynasty sought to resolve the conflict between cultures was through historiography. This dynastic obsession can be traced to Timur, who commissioned at the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth century a number of historical narratives about his life. This interest continued under his descendants, but the histories and *tadhkiras* (notices) written during Shahrukh's reign are distinguished by subtle but insistent modifications of Timur's legacy in accordance with the precepts of the new regime. The objective of many of these new histories was not only to set Timur's life and career within the general context of Islamic and Mongol history but also to establish the Shahrukhid line's claim as the legitimate heirs to the legacy. Written in both Turki

and Persian and completed during the three decades after his death, these later histories included many notable works:⁵⁰

Shams al-husn (The sun of beauty) of Tajuddin Salmani, a continuation of the *Zafarnama* (The book of conquest) of Shami, ordered by Shahrukh in 1410;

Zayl-i Zafarnama-i Shami (The continuation of the *Zafarnama* of Shami) of Hafiz-i Abru, ordered by Shahrukh in 1412;

Muntakhab al-tawarikh-i Mu'ini (The select Mu'ini chronicles) of Mu'inuddin Natanzi, a universal history containing sections on the life of Timur, presented to Shahrukh in 1414;

Roznama-i ghazavat-i Hindustani (The journal of the holy wars in India) of Ghiyathuddin Ali Yazdi, a now-lost account of Timur's 1398–99 invasion of India, possibly completed around 1415;

Fath-i bilad/vilayat-i Sham u Rum (The conquest of the lands/province of Syria and Anatolia) of Shihabuddin Muhammad Munshi, a now-lost account of Timur's victories over the Mamluk and Ottoman armies in 1400–1402;

Zafarnama of Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi, a revision of Shami's text, ordered by Ibrahim-Sultan and completed around 1425;

Majma' al-tawarikh/zubdat al-tawarikh-i Baysunghuri (The collection of chronicles/the Baysunghuri cream of chronicles) of Hafiz-i Abru. The last section (*zubdat*) is a corrected and expanded version of the *Zafarnama* of Shami, ordered by Shahrukh but completed around 1427 for Baysunghur.

Other histories commissioned by members of the ruling house pressed different claims, such as Iskandar's *Tarikh-i khayrat* (History of good works;

cat. no. 12)

⁵⁰The Chinese Emperors (reclining), Shih Huangti (top), founder of the Qin Dynasty, and Han Gaozu, founder of the Han Dynasty. From a *jam' al-tawarikh* of Rashidudeen Tabriz, dated 1318–19 (cat. no. 1114).
p. 114



c. 1412–14), which showed a distinct bias toward the line of his father, Umar-Shaykh ibn Timur. Ultimately, however, the official Shahrukhid perspective prevailed. It linked his rule with Timur's legacy, simultaneously positioning the dynasty in a broad Islamic historical scheme: Shahrukh and his princes were not portrayed as invaders and usurpers but as the rightful successors to previous "legitimate" rulers in Iran. The foundation for this Islamic world view was embodied in works such as the tenth-century *Tarikh-i Tabari* (History of Tabari) and Rashiduddin's early fourteenth-century *Jami' al-tawarikh* (Gatherer of chronicles), written for the Mongol rulers of Iran. A copy of the *Jami' al-tawarikh* executed by order of the Il-Khanid ruler Uljaytu at the Rab'-i Rashidi complex at Tabriz in 1314 (cat. no. 12C) with Shahrukh's seal has survived.

These legitimating intentions were most effectively implemented under the Timurids by the *Majma' al-tawarikh*, written at the order of Shahrukh by the historian Hafiz-i Abru (d. 1430), an intimate of Timur who participated in a number of his campaigns and who entered the service of Shahrukh after the conqueror's death. Surviving in perhaps as many as four large-scale, heavily illustrated copies, the text is a general history of the world from Adam to Shahrukh's reign in 1427 and recounts Biblical, Iranian, and Chinese history as well as that of the prophet Muhammad. It incorporates large sections from the works of Tabari, Rashiduddin, and Shami and "continues" the writings of the latter two to reinforce Timurid claims to succeed earlier Mongol rulers as well as Islamic caliphs and kings.¹¹

The *Majma' al-tawarikh*'s paintings also typify the Timurid notion of history. The illustrations (cat. no. 27) are directly influenced by the composite nature of the text. Archaistic in appearance, they are often rough recapitulations of the earlier *Jami' al-tawarikh* paintings, like those in Shahrukh's copy.¹² While the Timurid paintings mimic the format of the Mongol *Jami' al-tawarikh* prototypes, there are marked differences in style, iconography, and palette; in addition, the animated and more experimental Chinese-inspired handling of space in the fourteenth-century works has been conceptualized to a flat, reductive model in the Timurid versions (cat. no. 28). The pictorial intent of these new paintings, however, is nothing less than a contemporary translation of an earlier, specific visual



cat. no. 26

Illuminated page from a *Persian Anthology*
Yazd, dated A.H. 815 (A.D. 1411)
f. 14b



cat. no. 17

"The Appearance of Buddha
Sakyamuni to the People after
His Death"
From a *Majma' al-tawarikh* of Hafiz-i
Abru
Herat, c. 1425

cat. no. 18

"The Last of the Abbasid Caliphs,
Musta'sim"
From a *Majma' al-tawarikh* of Hafiz-i
Abru
Herat, c. 1425

language. One manuscript that was copied in part by Hafiz-i Abru (H.1653, Topkapı Sarayı Library) actually combines earlier Mongol illustrations with new Timurid ones. The reused Mongol section is from the *Jami' al-tawarikh*, and Timurid artists followed this model when they illustrated the remainder of the manuscript.⁵³

A number of factors contributed to the pictorial sameness and relatively inferior quality (when compared with other nonhistorical royal manuscripts) that characterize paintings in the *Majma'*: a dependence on earlier models, the large number of illustrations per page, the text's excessive length, and the generally conservative nature of Islamic historical illustration. Their appearance may above all be attributed to a conscious desire to conform with the text that glorified their Mongol predecessors. An earlier Timurid copy of the *Jami' al-tawarikh* (c. 1410–20) concentrates its similar illustrative program on the history of the Mongols, particularly the exhibition and celebration of their power.⁵⁴

The importance of maintaining continuity between Timurid and Mongol rule is evident in another manuscript produced for Shahrukh, an unillustrated genealogical work, the *Mu'izz al-ansab* (The glorifier of genealogies; 1426–27). Translated from its Turkī original into Persian, the text has been identified as a continuation of the *Shu'ab-i panjgana* (The fivefold branches) of Rashiduddin, an earlier genealogy of the rulers of nations. Shahrukh's expanded version provides a blueprint of Timurid lineage back through Chingiz Khan, but its real importance lies in its careful definition of the personal and clan affiliations of the Barlas, an official documentation of who belonged to the dynasty and their positions in its hierarchy.⁵⁵

One of the princes most actively involved in effecting a transition between the Mongol past and Shahrukhid priorities was Ibrahim-Sultan. His most enduring contribution to the dynasty involved the orchestration of an official view of his grandfather, accomplished primarily through historiographical endeavors. The prince served not simply as a patron but as an initiator and guiding participant in this work. The great achievement of his reign at Shiraz remains the creation of the *Zafarnama* of Yazdi, a much-embellished panegyrical biography of Timur.⁵⁶ Begun in 1419/20 and drawn from earlier Persian and Turkish

خلافت نشانند و او خرقه سفید و لباس مود و خلد و سوادش سادس شوال سه مان و ستایه بود در دهم جمادی الاخره سه اربعین و ستایه برو
 یعت کردند عقیقه الفرج بود نه میل بر بیان و نه سکودکان کمری و مرکز سگرات نمودن لکن شمع دو ستاره و صفی الدین عبدالمومن که
 معبد وقت بود و این عهد را غار و بنیم غکار و بود و مرا و در موسیقی تصانیف میار و دار و آلت غنا نیز از ترمت و معنی و غیران بایام اوقع تشریف
 بود بجز آنست که نام مستحیبه خواند نام ملاهی خوانند بر صورت مستحیبه در اینجا و در صاحب بود یکی خط عثمان عفان رضی الله عنه
 و یکی خط طین العابدین علی بن الحسین علیهما السلام بایام قمرت نامید شدند درسته اربع و ختمین غرق غلاد بود خنا کبریکیه اربعاع نظامیته
 ما غرق کردند و اماران منور باقی است و کشتی و کثک تارغایته می انداختا بدینا به بدیه و سایر غریف و باب العامی وقت و جامع یکبار غرق
 شد و خانه حلقامه مستغرق بودند و درین سال **سید** بهدار زلفه عظیم که در قحطیه پدید آمد از آن جانب مدینه بجهار فرسنگی **الله**
 ظاهر شد که شریان هژد و سرجال بود و ناها نده روز پاند و اجارای سوخت و در ربانی سوخت مستعصم کبی فربتا و تا از امارت کردند
 و درسته غنی و خمین اشتها ریافت ککو هر که کوخان می انداخته خانه خلفا و مستعصم چهارم مفریون اندازیدند و
 و عدم مفری کشته شد بدیده وقت مدت **مد عباس** از انقضای ملک بنی امیه که بربع الاول بود سه اربعین و ثلثین و مایه
 تا چهارم مفری سه ست و خمین و ستایه بانصد و دست و دو سال **باشد** و اول ایشان عبدالله لشقا ح
 و آخر ایشان **مد** مستعصم مدت عمرش چهل و شش سال بود و مدت خلافت پانزده سال و هفت ماه بود از اولاد او و کوهلترین ابوالنار
 المبارک بن المستعصم باقی ماند و بجای خاتون او و اعزاست از پسریش منعم کوی ممرتا با او یاری میکند او را **مرد** و **سوخان**
 زنی مفری ملاذ و از و سه فرزند او و در سمرقند و بفرمید که اکنون در حیوة است

و او را فرقت می شد ابوالنار قب مهابک نام **هو**
 حیوة است **ه** و **ه** و **ه**
 بالقوابیسه



accounts of Timur's life, its contents were determined by the prince, to whom numerous drafts were read for approval, before Yazdi stylized the last recension. The result, unlike Shami's simple earlier version for Timur, was an ornate, bombastic tome laced with Arabic and poetry much indebted to the style Ala'uddin Ata Malik Juwayni (d. 1283) used in his similar thirteenth-century work on the Mongols, the *Tarikh-i jahangushay* (History of the world conqueror).⁵⁷

The selection of events and the manner in which they were reported in the *Zafarnama* of Yazdi were profoundly influenced by its role as an official document of the new Timurid ideology. Like other dynastic histories after Timur's death, the Yazdi-Ibrahim-Sultan recension methodically modified Timur's own carefully constructed Chingizid fiction found in

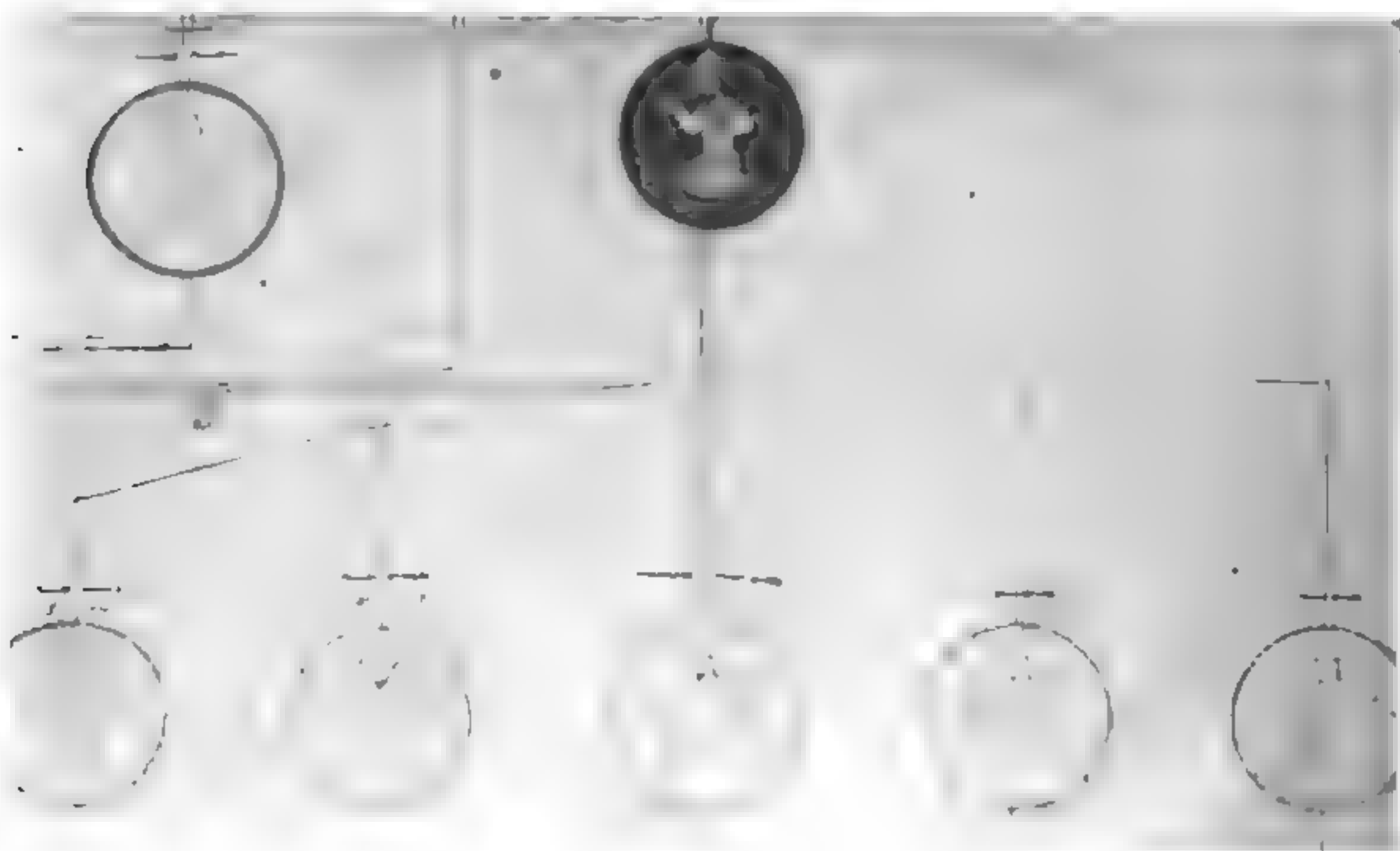
Shami's earlier version; it placed greater emphasis on Islamic elements, in the process advancing the claims of Shahrukh's line against those of Timur's other sons.

For example, Timur's relationship with the representatives of popular religion are given special emphasis by Yazdi, who portrays the conqueror, his wives, relations, and children visiting four times as many shrines and tombs of Muslim prophets and holy men as in Shami's version. In addition Shahrukh, who is altogether overlooked by Shami, is introduced by Yazdi as the *mujaddid* (renewer of faith) promised by the prophet Muhammad to appear at the beginning of each century.⁵⁸

The modified Chingizid-Timurid genealogy included in the *Zafarnama* of Yazdi closely resembles one found in an abridged version of Ulugh-Beg's lost *Ulus-i arba'-i Chingizi* (The four Chingizid nations) and is identical to those found in the Uighur genealogy composed for Khalil-Sultan during his brief reign (fig. 37), the jade tomb inscription at the Gur-i Amir, and the *Mu'izzal-ansab*.⁵⁹

As much a work of belles-lettres as of history, the

fig. 37
Section of a Timurid genealogy
showing descent from Timur (top)
Samarqand, c. 1405-9
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Istanbul, Topkapi Sarayı Library,
H. 2754, f. 13b





Zafarnama of Yazdi has survived in at least thirty known copies dated or attributable to the fifteenth century, a testimony to its effectiveness in disseminating the adjusted post-Timur perspective of the ruling house.⁶⁰ Often illustrated, the earliest surviving copy with paintings is connected with Ibrahim-Sultan, though completed the year after his death in 1436 (cat. no. 29). The figure of Timur is emphasized throughout the manuscript (fig. 38); his importance is made explicit in a series of battles, sieges, triumphal processions, and court scenes that justify and celebrate his actions (cat. no. 30).

Religious overtures and historical manipulation were mainstays of Timurid policy under Shahrukh, but this relentless propagandizing never fully obscured that the princes were members of a Turkic military aristocracy that relied primarily on force to implement their authority in the conquered lands. The panegyric tones of Timurid histories and *tadhkiras* do not reflect the frequently brutal military and political activity of the royal house, actions often directed against one another.

The ruthlessness that propelled the dynasty to power is epitomized by Iskandar-Sultan's treatment of Husayn Sharbatdar, a physician-turned-amir who poi-

cat. no. 29

"Siege of a City"
From a *Zafarnama* of Sharafuddin
Ali Yazdi
Shiraz, dated 10 Dhu'l-Hijja 819
A.D. June-July 1416
ff. 317b-318a

soned the prince's brother Pir-Muhammad, was captured, and then turned over to Iskandar.

At the shrine of Shaykh Mushihuddin Sa'di they shaved some of [Husayn Sharbatdar's] mustache and beard, smeared his face with rouge, put a dunce cap on his head, mounted him on a cow, and took him in this state before Mirza Iskandar.

"Why did you kill my brother?" the prince asked him.

"If I did kill him," he replied, "you weren't sorry."

Iskandar flew into a rage at this reply and wrenched the accursed one's eye from its socket with his own hand. He then ordered him to [be] clubbed to death. His evil head was sent to Isfahan, and his vile body was thrown into the fire two days later.⁶¹

Several years later Iskandar suffered a similar fate when Shahrukh removed him from power and had "the prince's eyes, which were the envy of the black-eyed houris . . . stripped of the garb of sight, like the eyes of the narcissus."⁶²

Such an action was not out of character, even for Shahrukh. After taking Samarqand from Khalil-Sultan

in 1409, he commanded his troops to torture and drive Shad-Malik, Khalil-Sultan's beloved wife, through the bazaars of the city.⁶³ Decades later he continued to horrify his contemporaries, when in 1446 he responded to Prince Muhammad ibn Baysunghur's rebellion in Sava by executing all of the prince's aristocratic and Shiite ulema adherents in the city.⁶⁴

Much of Shahrukh's success in advancing his claims to sovereignty during the first half of the fifteenth century can be attributed to the considerable military forces at his disposal. Timurid armies were still a formidable, if much reduced power and were continually in the field, particularly in the western dominions. Major military campaigns to counter outside threats were frequently undertaken, most notably those led in 1420, 1429, and 1434 by Shahrukh and a number of his sons against the Qaraqoyunlu Turcomans in western Iran. The military duties of some princes were considerable and critical to the security of the throne. Baysunghur, for example, pursued his father's rivals in numerous incidents from 1417 to 1429.⁶⁵ As part of this responsibility princes sought to convey an image of martial splendor, as seen in the recently discovered decorated armor of the prince Ibrahim-Sultan, the earliest datable Islamic mail and plate armor (cat. no. 31).

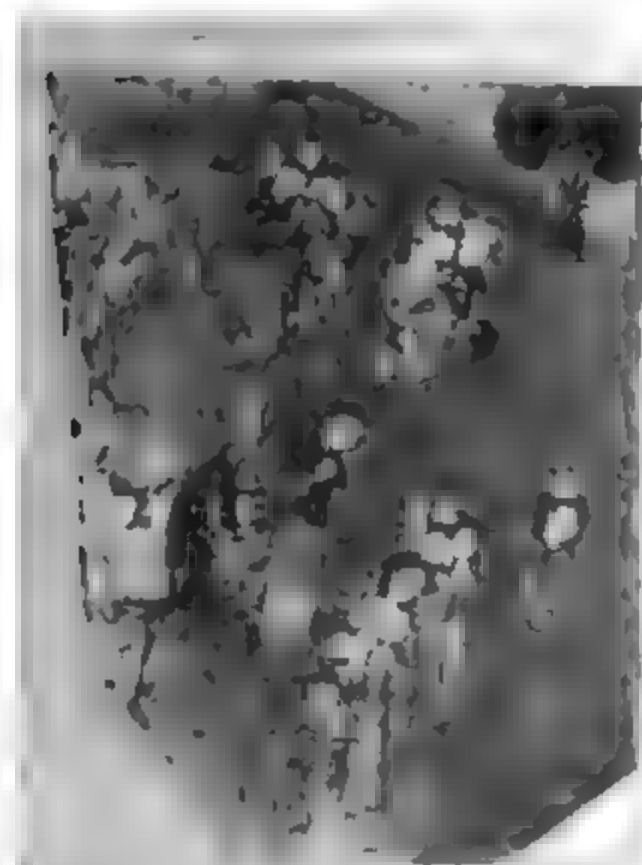


Fig. 18

"Timur Granting an Audience in Balkh on the Occasion of His Accession to Power in April 1370"
From a *Zafarnama* of Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi

Shiraz, dated A.H. Dhu'l-Hijja 839
A.D. June–July 1436

Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,
S86.0333.001/002

cat. no. 30 (opposite)

"Timur Celebrates His Conquest of Delhi in December 1398"
From a *Zafarnama* of Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi

Shiraz, dated A.H. Dhu'l-Hijja 839
A.D. June–July 1436

آنکه نازده شکوی شام بخت و نروزی منتظر کشد ... شام خرد از ترس گام به پشت و خنور شود



Independent displays of military prowess were almost inevitable among those princes beyond the immediate reach of the capital. Even during Shahrukh's reign Ulugh-Beg appears to have entertained loftier ambitions than being governor of Transoxiana. In the tradition of Timur, he led a number of large raids into Mughulistan during the early part of his life, including an unauthorized 1425 campaign. That year he also ordered an inscription in the Jilan-uti Gorge naming him the "most great Sultan, Subduer of kings of nations, Shadow of God on Earth"—without any reference to Shahrukh.⁶⁶ His military adventures largely ceased with the disastrous defeat he and his brother Muhammad-Juki suffered in 1427 at the hands of a much smaller contingent of Uzbeks, a source of great humiliation, the cause for temporary loss of his governorship, and an ominous portent of later events.⁶⁷ For the duration of his tenure as governor of Transoxiana (1409–47), Ulugh-Beg named his father on coins and in the khutba.

The military adventurism of Iskandar-Sultan, however, presented the major internal challenge to Shahrukh early in the century. Even during Timur's lifetime this ambitious prince was imprisoned and bastinadoed and members of his entourage executed as a result of his independent ventures as a Timurid governor in lands to the east of Samarqand.⁶⁸ These incidents figured in his transfer by Shahrukh to other posts in the west, first to Hamadan and then Shiraz, where he governed from 1409. In his new lands the prince surely alarmed his uncle with an extravagant building program, always a dangerous sign of independence, which included forts and castles, palaces, and gardens, as well as religious and charitable institutions.⁶⁹ His rebellious and frequently oppressive behavior there—he attacked Isfahan and Kirman, ravaging the latter, carrying off women and children, filling in canals and cutting down trees⁷⁰—forced military responses on a number of occasions from Shahrukh, who finally marched on Shiraz in 1414 and removed his nephew from power.

Despite these and other antagonisms governmental stability was maintained during Shahrukh's reign. An important factor in his administrative longevity and effectiveness was the faithful service and capabilities of key officials: Shahrukh's supreme military commander, secretary, and financial vizier held their posts for

thirty-five, thirty-one, and forty-three years respectively.⁷¹ The pervasive influence of Gawharshad also helped him sustain power. She was the daughter of an important Chaghatay noble, Ghiyathuddin Tarkhan, and her lineage gave Shahrukh added legitimacy among the nobles. Her skill at court politics and intrigue made her perhaps the most formidable political figure of the period, and in keeping with this reputation, her architectural legacy outshone that of her male contemporaries. She commanded both fear and respect from the princes, many of whom were reared in the capital under her tutelage. There is limited information about her life, but historical sources implicate her as the moving force behind numerous power struggles as well as the instigator of Shahrukh's executions at Sawa.⁷²

Stability was further encouraged by the dynasty's prosperity. Shahrukh renovated Herat, rebuilding the walls, bazaar, and citadel along with restoring or embellishing its most important religious structures.⁷³ The empire's considerable agricultural resources and vigorous trade policy provided a strong economy. Relations with foreign courts were cultivated by the sultan and were integral to the propagation of Timurid prestige and commercial wealth. Lacking the awesome military threat Timur possessed but still the beneficiaries of his legacy, Shahrukh and other Timurid princes exchanged diplomatic letters with the Ottoman sultans of Turkey and initiated commercial contacts with Egypt and India. The Timurids even secured acknowledgment of Shahrukh's suzerainty from the rulers of Delhi, Bengal, and Malwa.⁷⁴

Of far more importance was the exchange of embassies that occurred between Timurid Iran and Ming China as Shahrukh eased the hostility that characterized Timurid-Ming relations at the end of his father's reign. He entered "tributary relations" with China mainly as a profitable venture, and with a modification of political rhetoric from both sides embassies were exchanged, allowing both courts access to desired goods.⁷⁵ The Ming court's desire for Central Asian horses, its need for military intelligence, and its program of foreign exploration encouraged these contacts; in turn the Timurids coveted porcelains and embroidered silks among other trade items.

Both Persian and Chinese sources record numerous exchanges: Chinese missions reached Samarqand,



cat. no. 91

Armor of Ibrahim Sulran ibn Shaheukh
Shiraz, c. 1415-35



cat. no. 32

"Khusraw Receives Farhad"
From a *Khamsa* of Nizami
Herat, dated A.H. 849 (A.D. 1445–46)
I 622

Bukhara, Herat, Shiraz, and Isfahan, while Timurid embassies traveled through the oasis towns of Central Asia to the imperial court at Khanbaliq (Beijing).⁷⁶ Typical of these Timurid forays was a five hundred-person embassy that left Herat for Beijing on November 24, 1419, and included representatives of Shahrukh and his five sons. Ghiyathuddin Naqqash, a painter, was ordered to keep an account of the journey, which lasted more than two years. His diary, preserved in the *Rawzat al-safa* (Garden of purity) of Mirkhwand, provides descriptions, albeit rhetorical and generalized, of the imperial and Buddhist complexes the embassy saw and reflects the Timurids' wide-eyed admiration of Chinese art.⁷⁷

The period of relaxed diplomatic relations between Shahrukh and the Ming court was short-lived, extending only to about 1425, but during those years Iran and Central Asia were inundated with a new wave of chinoiserie, which had a profound impact on Timurid art. Earlier under Mongol hegemony a number of Chinese elements had been assimilated into Iranian art. In the early fifteenth century traditional Chinese motifs—dragons, *qilin* (mythical Chinese beasts), lions, phoe-

nixes, ducks, and cranes, along with stylized clouds, rocks, and vegetation—were reintroduced with new vigor into the Timurid vocabulary. In Timurid works from the period, however, these subjects carry none of the traditional Chinese symbolism and reflect instead Islamic techniques and conceptions.

The political, religious, and economic policies pursued under Shahrukh created an atmosphere in which artistic patronage flourished on an unprecedented scale within the ruling house. From as early as Abbasid times the mythology of royal life had nurtured a specific concept of a princely world: separate, private, filled with luxury, and enhanced by works of art. The Timurid aristocracy embraced this ideal (cat. no. 32, f. 62a). In a rhyming observation Hafiz-i Abru noted that under Shahrukh all strove according to their rank in building *dur u qusur* (residences and palaces), *kakh u bagh* (pavilions and gardens), and *taq u riwaq* (vaults and porticoes).⁷⁸ Many of these projects occurred outside Herat in the suburbs to the north, which were favored for new construction.

The lush garden complexes built there provided a contrived setting for the official activities of the royal house (cat. no. 21, ff. 1b–2a), and by the end of his reign Shahrukh and the Timurid aristocracy of Herat had established themselves in a series of gardens, which rivaled those of Timur's Samarqand in size and ambitious construction. More than thirty are described in contemporary sources, many of them renovations of earlier gardens, like Shahrukh's principal residence known as the Bagh-i Zaghan (Raven Garden) or the Bagh-i Safed (White Garden), where his son Baysunghur lived. Often surrounded by walls with ornamented towers and gateways, Timurid gardens—the prototype for what is today commonly known as the Islamic garden—usually contained an arrangement of pavilions, watercourses, and pools; elaborately decorated tents were frequently found amidst their grounds planted with flowers and blossoming trees.⁷⁹

Babur left a revealing description of the seductive ambience he encountered on his visit to the Bagh-i Safed at the end of the fifteenth century:

Several days later [the Timurid prince] Muzaffar Mirza sent an invitation to his quarters in the Bagh-i Safed. . . . [He] took us to an edifice built by Babur Mirza [an earlier Timurid prince] called the Tarab-

khana (House of Joy). There a drinking party took place. The Tarabkhana was situated in the middle of a small garden. It was a smallish building of two stories and rather pleasant. The upper story had been constructed very elaborately. In the four corners were four alcoves (*hujra*). Aside from the alcoves . . . it was one room, and between the alcoves were things like *shahnishins* (raised platforms or daises). Every side of the room was painted. . . . The paintings were commissioned by Sultan Abu-Sa'id Mirza to depict his battles and encounters. . . .

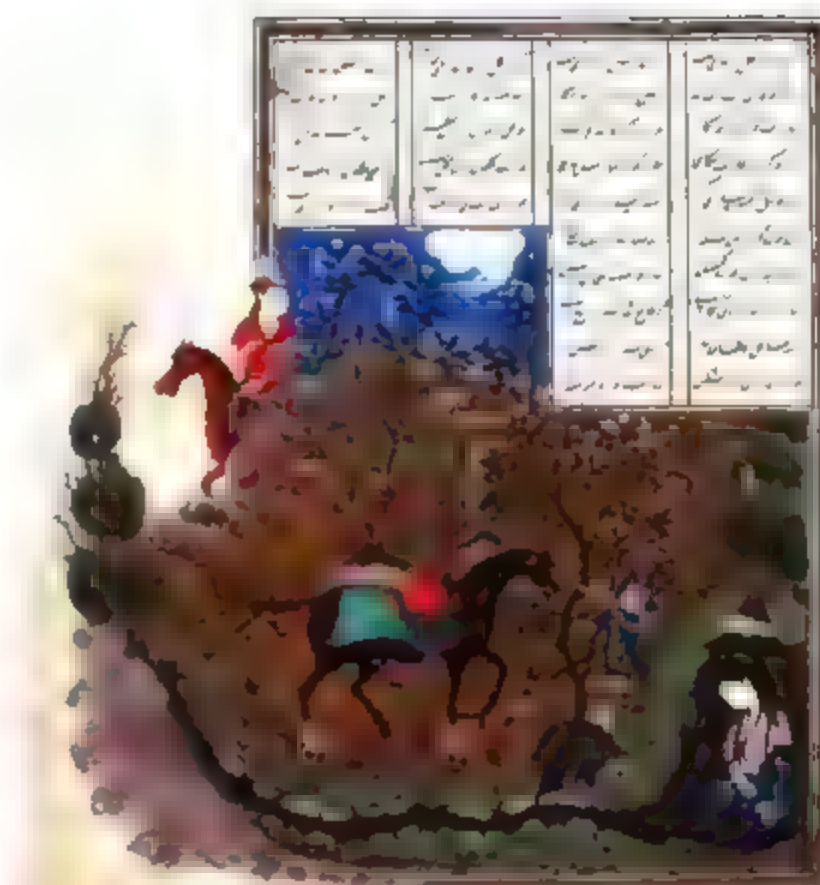
. . . [After being seated,] the pleasure cups were filled and the cupbearers began to circulate and offer them to the guests, who started gulping down the clear wine as though it was the water of life. The party grew heated as the wine went to people's heads

. . . Here we had come to a fabulous city like Herat, where all the implements of pleasure and revelry were ready and present, and all the devices of enjoyment and entertainment were close at hand. If I didn't drink now, when would I?⁸⁰

Babur also recorded his impressions of Ulugh-Beg's private spaces at Samarqand. Among these was the Bagh-i Maydan (Garden of the Plain), which contained a two-story structure, the Chihil Sutun (Forty Pillars), notable for its carved stone pillars in a variety of shapes.⁸¹

The Timurids immersed themselves in the pursuits and luxurious trappings of their new life, assimilating the symbols of the Persian Islamic monarchical tradition with the celebration of their own Turco-Mongol past. Their pleasures—hunting, hawking, romance, feasting—were now more than pastimes: they became prerogatives of royal life in the Persianate tradition (cat. no. 32, ff. 40a, 154b; cat. no. 33). Artistic patronage was not perceived as a subsidiary preoccupation but as an integral component of rule. The impression of a sophisticated cultural veneer conveyed by poets or by works of art generated considerable prestige, which among rival courts in the eastern Islamic world was eventually translated into political power.⁸² This vision of kingship was hardly new, but it became heightened and codified under the Timurids.

Surrounded by poets, calligraphers, musicians, and singers, the Timurid princes and their courts received



cat. no. 32

"Khusrau Spies Shahn Bathing"
From a *Khamsa* of Nizami
Herat, dated A.H. 849 (A.D. 1445–46);
f. 40a

lavish encomia for their patronage, as in the biographer Dawlatshah's praise of Baysunghur:

Alike in talent and the encouragement of talent, he was famous throughout the world. Calligraphy and poetry were highly esteemed in his time, and scholars and men of talent, attracted by his renown, flocked from all regions and quarters to enter his service. . . . He showed favour to men of talent, loved poets, strove after refinement and luxury, and entertained witty courtiers and boon companions. Of the kings of all times since Khusrau Parviz none lived so joyous and splendid a life as Baysunghur Sultan.⁸³

cat. no. 31

cat. no. 31

"Baysunghur Ibn Shahrukh Seated
in a Garden"
From a *Khamsa* of Nizami
Abu'l-Ma'ali Nasrullah
Herat, dated A.H. 854 (A.D. October 1429);
ff. 2b–2a







cat. no. 11

"Bahram Gosh Hunting"
 From a *Khamsa* of Nizami
 Herat, dated A.H. 849 (A.D. 1441-42)
 L. 154b

Contemporary opinion as well as posterity would judge a ruler on his ability to attract the leading talents of the age, those luminaries whose abilities to "ornament" a court made them coveted prizes. The critical role in the propagation of this courtly image fell to the Timurid princes, whose concerted patronage successfully enveloped the dynasty in an aura of power and cultural prowess that supported their claims to legitimacy. Literary sources from this period even begin to mention artists' names, a change that reflects in part the princes' increased interest in recruiting the most talented practitioners of the arts.

A prince's own cultural abilities were of great significance in the cultivated atmosphere this Turkic military class had created. Although Persian was not their native tongue, the Persianate cultural complex, particularly the Persian literary tradition, dictated the course of most royal efforts in literature and the arts.

Poetry was employed in correspondence among Ibrahim-Sultan at Shiraz, Baysunghur at Herat, and Ulugh-Beg at Samarqand, oftentimes in debates over cultural matters. For example, Dawlatshah recorded, "Prince Baysunghur preferred [Amir] Khusraw's *Khamsa* to Nizami's, while his late highness Ulugh-Beg Kūrāgān did not agree and was a proponent of Shaykh Nizami. Between these two learned princes there was on occasion heated debate over these [conflicting] claims, and they compared the two *Khamsas* line by line."⁸⁴

In response to repeated requests by Ibrahim-Sultan for the services of the famous musician Khwaja Yusuf of Andijan, including a staggering offer of one hundred thousand dinars, Baysunghur refused him in verse with an allusion to the Old Testament: "We do not sell our Joseph. You keep your black silver."⁸⁵

Poetry was composed by several other early princes,

such as Iskandar, whose surviving verse reflects the pride and ambition so apparent in his actions: "What importance can the Gog [and Magog] of worldly events have for me, who am like Alexander's dam in splendor?"⁸⁶

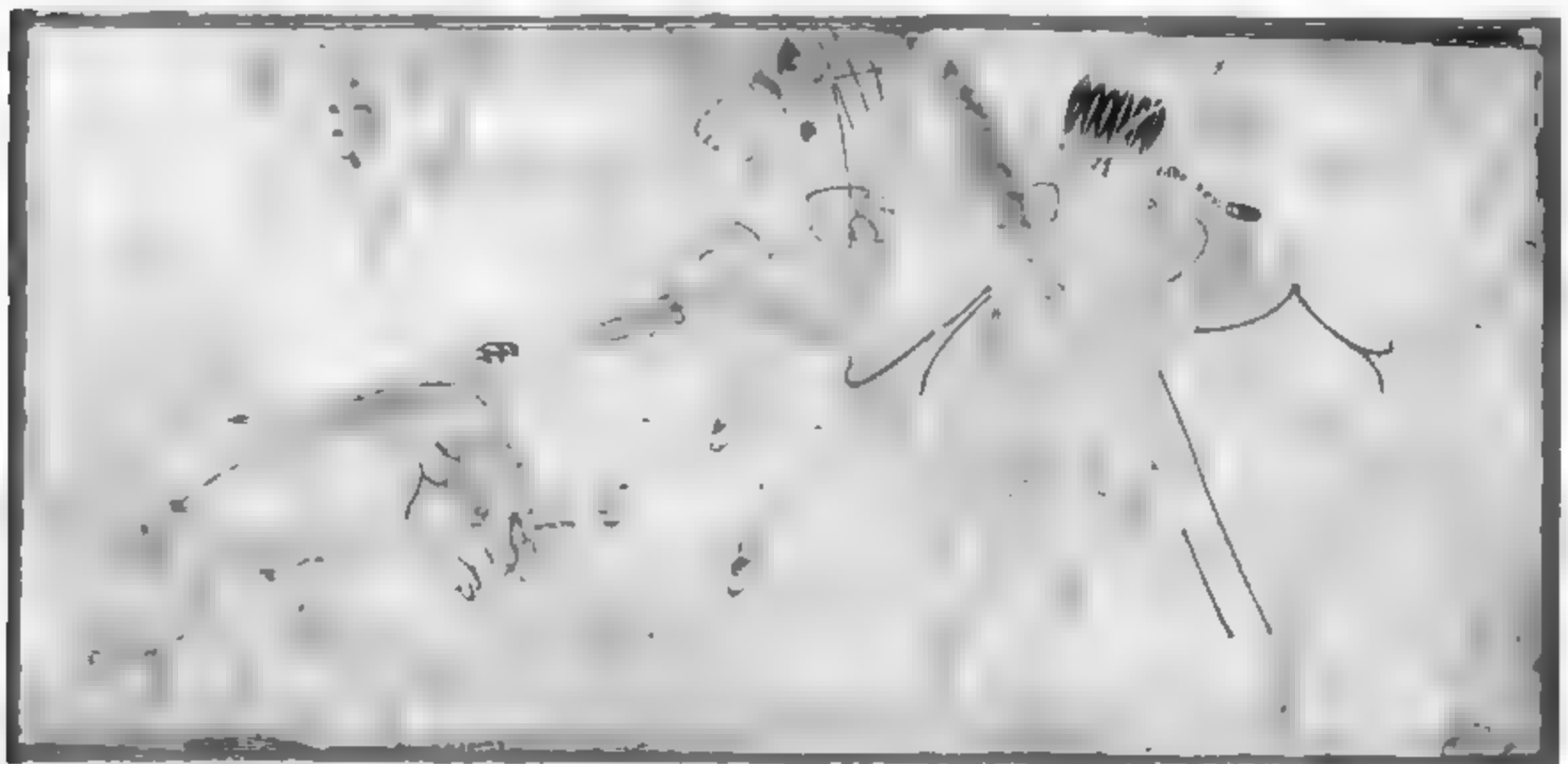
As poets, patrons, and collectors of verse the princes became the leading arbiters of literary taste throughout the eastern Islamic world. A number of princes assembled circles of poets, considered vital weapons in poetic competition that had become a form of court rivalry. Their keen interest in literary merit led to the formation of extensive collections. Baysunghur, for example, managed to collect 120,000 verses of Amir Khusraw before deciding it was futile to try to gather all of them.⁸⁷

Calligraphy was perhaps the most obvious of dynastic claims to cultural prowess. A number of princes won fame as royal calligraphers, and their surviving works demonstrate a thorough facility with the tradition. Ibrahim-Sultan inscribed verses in his own hand at the ruins of Persepolis, an ancient pre-Islamic royal site,⁸⁸ and his work was praised by Dawlatshah later in the fifteenth century:

It is well known that [Ibrahim-Sultan] wrote the records of Fars in his own hand, and his calligraphy was so good that he copied the writing of Qiblat al-Kuttab Yaqut al-Musta'simi, sent it out, and sold it, and not one keen-sighted critic was able to tell the difference. Even today remain the inscriptions he wrote on buildings, mosques, and schools in Fars, and still to this day scrolls and exercises adorned with his writing are to be found among calligraphers.⁸⁹

A number of bold calligraphic specimens by Baysunghur are preserved in the Topkapı albums,⁹⁰ along with his *Fihrist-i khutut-i ustadan-i sab'a* (The seven masters calligraphic album). The "seven masters" are the revered Yaqut al-Musta'simi (d. 1298) and six of his pupils, all famous Il-Khanid calligraphers, who wrote the cursive scripts known as the *aqlam-i sitta* (six scripts), which Baysunghur also admired and wrote skillfully.⁹¹ An even more remarkable document of the role calligraphy played in Timurid cultural life is a calligraphic exercise, also found in Istanbul (fig. 39). The Arabic proverb "Through gratitude favors continue,"

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cat. no. 31

"Baysunghur Slays a Wolf"

Herat, c. 1425-34

copied in *tawqi'* script by Ahmad al-Rumi, is repeated by Baysunghur and eleven others, some identifiable as members of the prince's *kitabkhana*, others perhaps companions. The page's purpose may have been no more than a simple case of "one-upmanship" and is possibly a memento of a social gathering.⁹²

114 An elegant new script, the delicately elongated *nasta'liq*, appeared at the end of the fourteenth century and quickly became the most fashionable hand for the copying of secular manuscripts. This development was without doubt tied to the large number of scribes employed by Timurid courts, whose cultural agenda demanded their services. Baysunghur, for example, employed forty scribes under the direction of the celebrated Ja'far of Tabriz. The experiences of one calligrapher in particular, Ma'rif Khatat, shows how seriously certain princes regarded cultural matters. Ma'rif had the distinction of serving four of the most important book patrons of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries: Sultan Ahmad Jalayir (d. 1410) of Baghdad and Tabriz, Iskandar-Sultan, Shahrukh, and Baysunghur. Equally famous for his wit, poetic talent, and conversational gifts, Ma'rif angered Baysunghur by refusing to copy the *Khamsa* of Nizami on paper that the prince had sent to him—it was kept for a year and a half before being returned blank. When investigating the 1427 attempt on Shahrukh's life, Baysunghur ordered the arrest and imprisonment of Ma'rif, and it was rumored that the prince sought revenge for the calligrapher's earlier rebuff. Led to the "foot of the gallows" several times, he was saved only by the intervention of powerful friends.⁹³

While individual artistic expression on the part of the princes helped define the parameters of the dynasty's cultural ambitions, the heart of the Timurid aesthetic vision is found in the prolific outpouring of works from the royal workshops. Princes commissioned illustrated and illuminated manuscripts, paintings, drawings, textiles, rugs, and objects in metal, wood, and hardstone from the *kitabkhana* to create a world anew for the dynasty. The panegyrical claims of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century literary sources leave little doubt that the Timurid princes were active participants in this process of artistic production.

Despite variations in execution Timurid art and architecture had a general uniformity of appearance by around 1430; this suggests the existence of an aesthetic

vision that stressed formal unity among all its participants. The princes' coordinated response to the circumstances after Timur's death was responsible for the emergence of a mature, unified Timurid art that both identified and redefined the ruling house. Its forms and intentions were powered by two critical factors: an intensified, highly controlled artistic program reliant on past traditions and the creation of a system of codification that produced consistent images destined to become emblematic of the dynasty.

Books were an integral element of the new cultural agenda and represent perhaps the most sophisticated embodiment of the Timurids' intentions and capabilities. Given the dynasty's interest in Persian literature, luxury productions of the tradition's classical texts were particularly coveted. Illustrated poetry became the supreme expression of Timurid taste, and the major dynastic commissions from the first half of the century rank among the finest illustrated books ever produced. They include

An *Anthology*, dated 1407, now in the Topkapı Sarayı Library, Istanbul (H.796);

An *Anthology*, copied for Iskandar-Sultan in 1410–11, now in the British Library, London (Add.27261);

An *Anthology*, copied for Iskandar-Sultan in 1410–11, now in the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon (L.A.161);⁹⁴

A *Gulistan* (Rose garden) of Sa'di, copied for Baysunghur in 1426–27, now in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (Ms.119);

An *Anthology*, copied for Baysunghur in 1426–27, now at I Tatti, Settignano, Florence;⁹⁵

A *Humay u Humayun* (Humay and Humayun) of Khwaju Kirmani, copied for Baysunghur in 1427–28, now in the Nationalbibliothek, Vienna (N.F.382);⁹⁶

A *Khamsa* of Nizami, copied for Shahrukh in 1431, now in the State Hermitage, Leningrad (VR-1000);

A *Khamsa* of Nizami, copied for Ismat al-Dunya, wife of Muhammad-Juki ibn Shahrukh, in 1445–46, now in the Topkapı Sarayı Library, Istanbul (H.781).



Fig. 19

Calligraphic exercise by Baysunghur
ibn Shahrūkh and companions
Herat, c. 1410-30
Ink on paper
68 x 50 cm (26 3/4 x 19 3/4 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H.2252, f. 30b

The idea of painting pictures in texts of lyrical poetry blossomed during the late fourteenth century among western Iranian dynasties mainly of Turco-Mongol origin, particularly the Jalayirids. These pre-Timurid pictures are unlike any seen before, but the breathtaking refinements introduced under Timurid patronage further transformed these new images to the point where they came to represent the tranquil, brilliantly lit realm of beauty and perfection the princes saw as their own world. The visionary qualities of Timurid poetic painting often obscure the simplicity and clarity of the painting's structure, based on spatial

and compositional devices from paintings executed for western Iranian dynasties. The Timurids streamlined these features during the first three decades of the fifteenth century and developed a style that came to be considered canonical by contemporaries and later admirers. Generally framed in a vertical format with the text vastly reduced, Timurid poetic painting dominates the page, using a high horizon and the placement of compositional elements up and down the surface of the painting to crystallize pictorial space into a taut, schematic arrangement in two dimensions (cat. no. 34). Animate and inanimate objects alike are idealized,



cat. no. 15

"Shirin Examines the Portrait of
Khusraw"
From an *Anthology*
Shiraz, dated A.H. 811–14
(A.D. 1410–11)
F. 58a

cat. no. 14

"Humay and Humayon in a Garden"
Possibly from an *Anthology*
Herat, c. 1410

aligned in a precise equilibrium, and these contrivances are amplified by the luminous colors that ornament figures and saturate landscapes in heightened, unearthly glows.

Literary anthologies with a variety of contents enjoyed widespread popularity among members of the royal house during this period, as a broad knowledge of Persian literature was considered highly desirable. The two famous poetic anthologies illustrated at Shiraz for Iskandar-Sultan give for the first time full vent to the lyrical and imaginative potential of Timurid manuscript painting. Not only do their illustrations represent refinements of the brilliant formal and technical advances of Jalayirid artists at Baghdad and Tabriz, but they also chart much of the future course of painting for the dynasty. Compared with the paintings executed during Timur's reign (cat. no. 16), they are distillations with more refined line and more brilliant color (cat. no. 15). Highly symptomatic of the dynasty's aesthetic shift, the small scale and lyricism in these paintings underscore their essential differences with Timur's artistic interests. Their intimate, almost precious qualities signal a new conception of painting that would probably have been incompatible with the conqueror's personal taste and objectives.

While pages in these books are marked by numerous experiments in the relationship between image and text, the paintings served as a primary source for compositions found in later royal Timurid manuscripts, a practice undoubtedly facilitated by the use of pounces, sketches, and full-scale copies in addition to the inevitable circulation of artists and manuscripts.⁹⁷ Repetition is an integral feature of Timurid works from Shahrukh's reign and is particularly well documented in the *Khamsa* done for Ismat al-Dunya: six of the thirteen paintings in her book are duplicates of earlier Timurid compositions; three of them are based on models executed for Iskandar-Sultan's *Anthology*, now in the British Library (see Appendix III).

The repeated appearance of compositions originally commissioned by Iskandar reflects their suitability as royal images. An analysis of the Nizami portions of the anthologies executed for the prince shows that despite their variety of contents the illustrations consistently emphasize certain themes underlying the depicted incident: heroics, romance, and above all royal myth. In short these paintings stress the celebratory aspect of





CAT. NO. 35

"View of Mecca and Pilgrims"
From an *Anthology*
Shiraz, dated A.H. 813-14
(A.D. 1410-11)
ff. 362b-461a



Iskandar's rule by including court ritual that is often extraneous to the text.⁹⁴

Another distinguishing element of several of Iskandar's manuscripts is the accompanying illumination and drawing, which reach new levels of sumptuousness. Painting is the dominant form of visual imagery in earlier illustrated manuscripts, but in these works illumination and other forms of text decoration compete with illustration for visual prominence. There is a proliferation of arabesque panels and floral sprays in gold, and the pages are further decorated with drawings in the margins, in scalloped medallions, and on entire pages (cat. no. 36, f. 87b). These books are richly ornamented objects, not simply texts to be read.

Numerous Timurid manuscripts are replete with vegetal patterns, fantastic creatures, and animal combats that are unrelated to the text. Usually set down in dynamic, calligraphic line and washed with pale colors,

their style and execution are markedly different from text illustrations in the same book. These decorative images, which also appear on bindings, are related to hundreds of separate drawings, now concentrated in the Diez album (in the Staatsbibliothek, West Berlin) and the Topkapı Sarayı album H.2152, which are attributable to the patronage not only of Iskandar-Sultan but of Baysunghur, Ibrahim-Sultan, and Shahrukh. Given that much of their subject matter and style is Chinese inspired, their ubiquity at the Timurid courts during Shahrukh's reign has often been tied to the increased exchange of embassies with Ming China.⁹⁵ Their proliferation, however, is equally attributable to the dynasty's characteristic codification and distribution of East Asian motifs that had been present in Iranian and Central Asian art since the late thirteenth century.

At the beginning of Shahrukh's reign luxury manu-



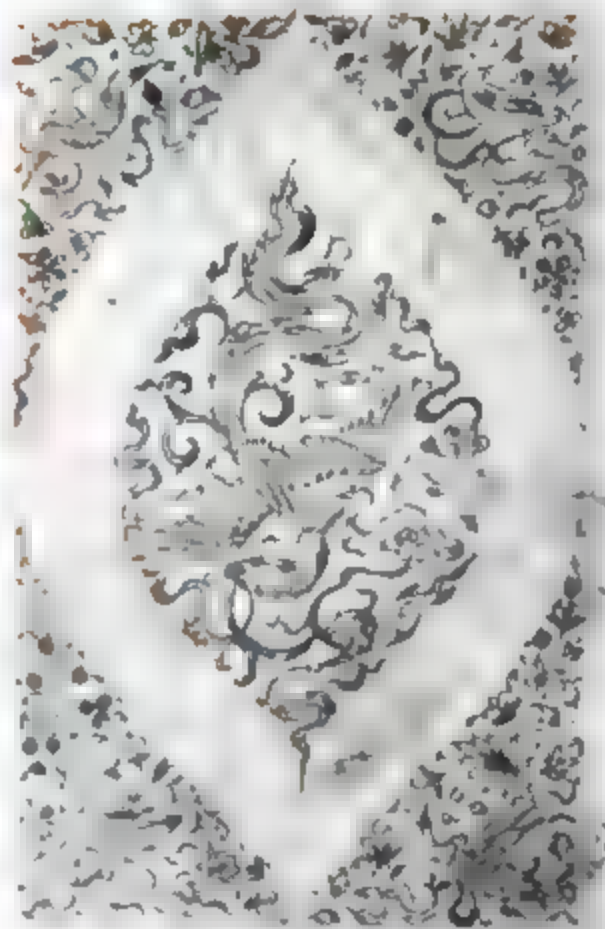
cat. no. 37

"Battle of the Clans"
From an Anthology
Shiraz, dated A.H. 823 (A.D. 1420)

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script production appears to have been primarily based in western Iran under Iskandar-Sultan, but by the 1420s the center of activity had shifted east. Iskandar's fall in 1414, the death of Sultan Ahmad Jalayir in 1410, and Baysunghur's capture of Tabriz from the Qaraqoyunlu in 1420 shattered the western region's artistic dominance, and major illustrated poetic manuscripts did not appear again until the 1420s. At that time poetic painting continued at Shiraz, albeit on a distinctly more modest scale, as evidenced by a 1420 *Anthology* most likely sent as a gift to Baysunghur by Ibrahim-Sultan (cat. no. 37).

For the remainder of the fifteenth century Herat stood as the undisputed center of Timurid power and patronage. The dispersion of artists from western Iran followed the 1411 decree of Ulugh-Beg freeing artists and craftsmen forcibly settled at Samarqand by Timur; this diaspora brought to the new capital a technical

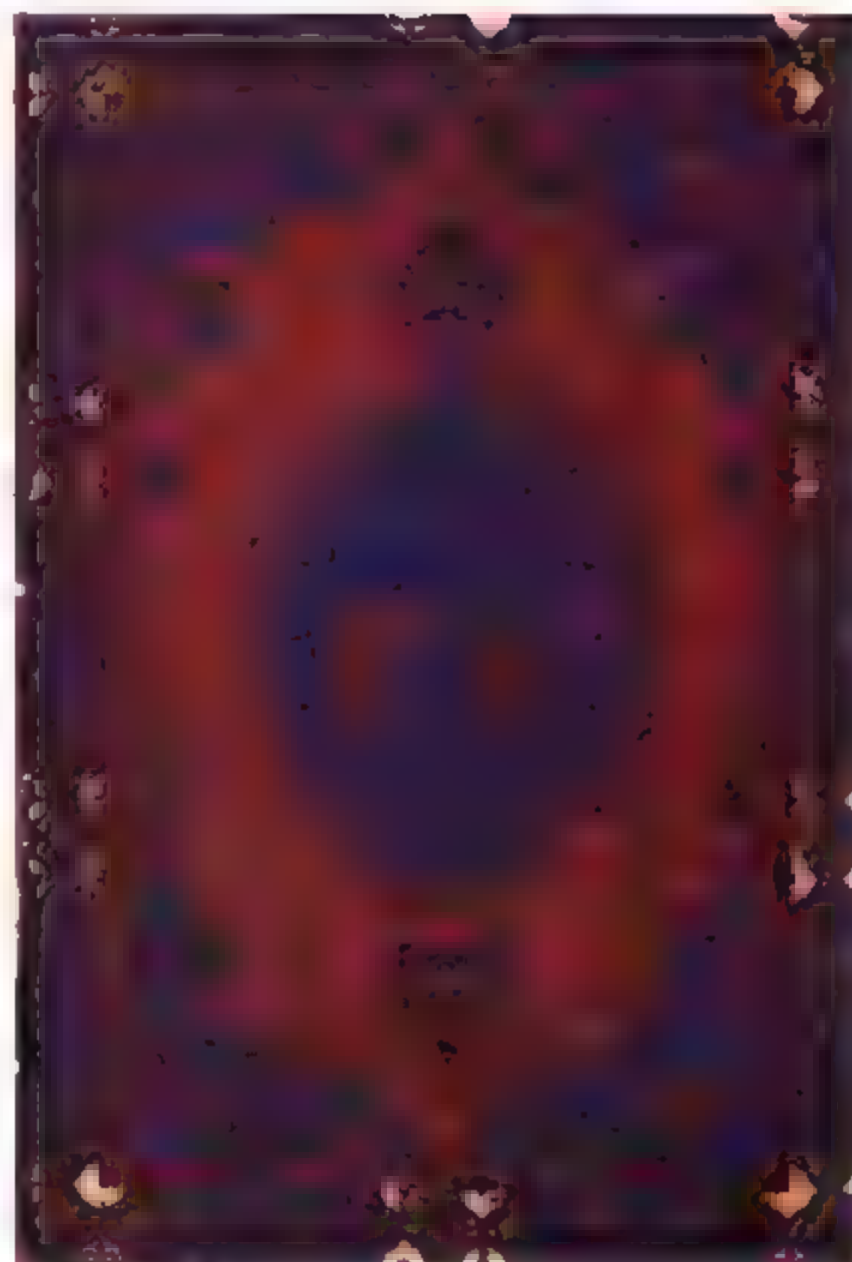


cat. no. 38

Drawing from the *Horoscope* of
Iskandar-Sultan for Umar-Shaykh
Shiraz, dated A.H. 22 Dhul-Hijja 823
(A.D. 18 April 1421)
f. 87b

expertise capable of implementing royal ideologies and programs. Shahrukh as reigning monarch appears to have made adroit use of this talent primarily in his architectural projects, though the paintings in his 1431 *Khamisa* (cat. no. 38, f. 251a) are fully under the sway of ideas pioneered in western Iranian poetic texts illustrated for Sultan Ahmad Jalayir and Iskandar-Sultan; these paintings show a marked improvement in the quality of their materials (particularly pigments), finer execution, and the codification of compositions.

However, two contemporary volumes of the poetry of Attar (one dated 1438) executed for the sultan have markedly different visual properties. Their thin, highly polished pages are colored in an alternating array of purple, pale blue, and pink animated by gold flecks and drawings in gold—usually landscapes at odd juxtapositions to the text—that, like their elaborately designed covers, are Chinese inspired in style and subject (cat. nos. 39–40). Their appearance among the extant manuscripts attributable to Shahrukh confirms that the dynasty continued to encourage and incorporate innovation even while rigorously appropriating and codifying earlier forms.



cat. no. 40

Interior binding of a *Satta* of Attar
Herat, dated A.H. 27 Shawwal 841
(A.D. 27 April 1438)

cat. no. 39

Folio from a *Khamisa* of Attar
Herat, c. 1438
f. 60a

cat. no. 38 opposite

"The Palace of Khawarnaq"
From a *Khamisa* of Nizami
Herat, dated A.H. Rabi' u Thani 835
(A.D. December 1431)
f. 251a

cat. no. 42 (opposite)

"A Vizier Reduced to Poverty Sets
before the King's Palace"
From a *Gulistan* of Sa'di
Herat, dated A.H. 830 (A.D. 1426–27)
f. 92

122



cat. no. 41

Kolophon page from a *Gulistan* of Sa'di
Herat, dated A.H. 830 (A.D. 1426–27)
f. 96a

The differing tastes of individual members of the ruling house gave the dynasty's cultural veneer a myriad of expressions. Whereas Shahrukh manifested broader dynastic concerns in much of his patronage of architecture and books, Baysunghur's more personal literary inclinations profoundly affected the formulation of an internal visual identity for the ruling house. While the prince was also a patron of numerous unillustrated historical manuscripts, his three early poetic manuscripts—the *Gulistan* of Sa'di, the 1426–27 *Anthology*, and the *Humay u Humayun* of Khwaju Kirmānī—thematically and formally codified painting in that idiom, establishing a distinctive pictorial canon whose sleek, polished balance of form and color came to represent the Timurid aesthetic stance. This predominant formalism is apparent in his *Gulistan*, a collection of anecdotes framed as ethical and didactic tales. The precise execution and refinement of pigments in the colored headings and illuminated panels achieve an effect similar to Islamic inlaid metalwork (cat. no. 41, f. 96a). The surface density and constriction of earlier illumination is released in favor of luminous floral and vegetal patterns whose cadences are open, graceful, and ordered. These paintings are crystallizations of a formal vocabulary inherited from earlier western Iranian painting, yet in large part their effectiveness resides in daring new modulations of color not seen under Timur or even Iskandar—flaming oranges, icy turquoises, shining golds—that charge compositions, instilling a unity marked less by graphic considerations than by palette (cat. no. 41, ff. 3b, 9a).

These modifications led to a visual equilibrium in which calligraphy, illumination, and image were united in extraordinary harmony. The considerable cost and effort expended to embellish this *Gulistan* again suggest that the Timurid elite had started to view books as works of art, which were capable of conveying a variety of social and political messages. This interpretation is given further impetus by two important developments in other works executed for the prince. One is the conscious stress in illustrations on royal pomp and ceremony drawn from an exclusive repertoire of princely activities: the hunt, polo, and garden and court entertainment. The prominence of distinctly royal activity in Baysunghur's 1426–27 *Anthology*, for example, places greater significance on setting than the subject illustrated; a garden scene with a prince is not

بحکایت جفا دار ی مردت بر مردم آزاری حکایت
 یکی از هوک ز انصاف پارسایی را پرسید که از جفا تما که ام فاضله شکست خواب
 نیم روز مادران یک نفس خلق را نیازادی ظالمی راسته ددم غم روز گتم این گفت خواب
 و امک خوابش بر از پندار انجان بد ز خاک پنداره به رعیت
 یکی از هوک شنیدم که شبی در عشرت روز کرد بود در میان ستمی گفت
 ما را بجان خوشتر ازین مکدم که نیک و بد اندیشه و اندکس غم
 درویش بر بنه بر پادشاه خفته بود گفت بیت
 ای امک با قبال تو در عالم نیست که مکن گفت میت غم ما میت



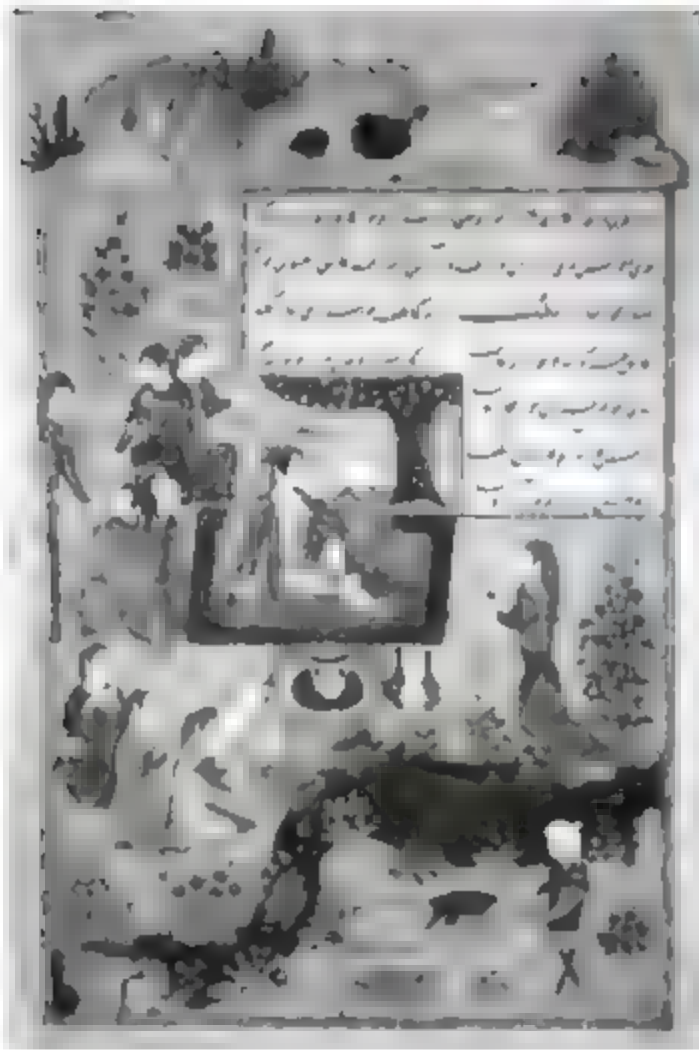


fig. 40

"Baysunghur with His Ladies
in a Garden"
From an *Anthology* copied for
Baysunghur ibn Shahrūkh
Herat, dated A.H. 840 (A.D. 1426–27)
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
35.1 x 15.1 cm (4 1/8 x 6 in.)
Florence: I. Tatti. Berenson Collection,
1444

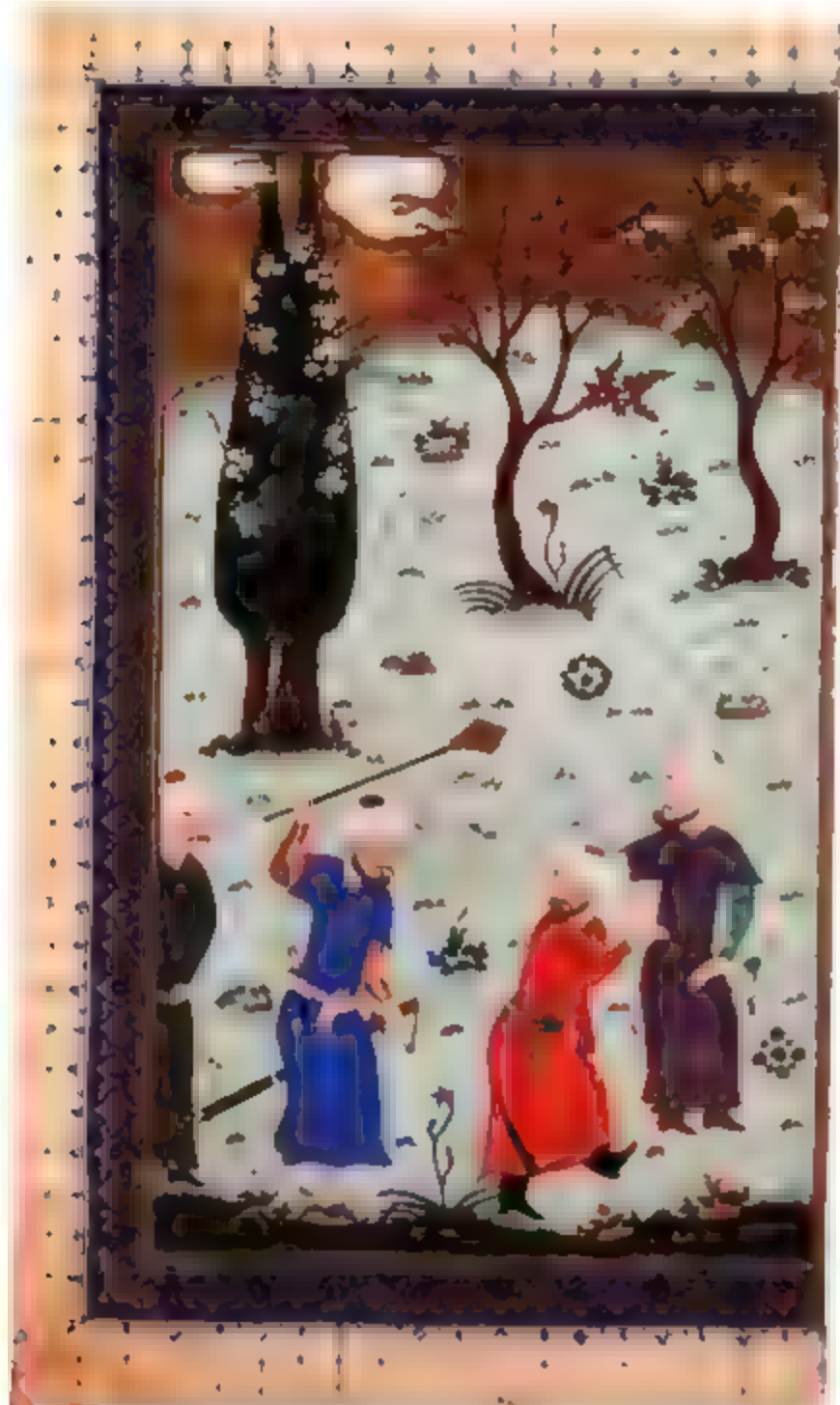


cat. no. 42

"Sa di and His Teacher in a Garden"
From a *Consolation* of Sa di
Herat, dated A.H. 850 (A.D. 1426–27)
14b

so much the representation of a specific royal dalliance as it is an orchestrated visualization of a regal concept, that of the royal lover (fig. 40). Supplementing this influx of theatrical court ritual in illustrations is the incorporation of idealized "portraits" of the patron (cat. no. 42).¹⁰⁰ These images of Baysunghur have an internal manuscript function and external significance that are interdependent: they give the prince the leading role in his own books, transforming the books into literal royal vehicles that legitimate his claims to rule.

The highly stylized and artificial world depicted in Timurid poetic painting around 1430 reaches maturity in a now-detached painting, "Humay and Humayun in a Garden," from a lost manuscript or *jung* (anthology) (cat. no. 34). The nearly absolute aesthetic authority of this type of imagery made it a fitting embodiment of Timurid life for the ruling house.



cat. no. 42

"A Prince Seated in a Garden"
From a lost manuscript
Herat, c. 1425-30



cat. no. 43

"The Div Akwan Throws Rostam
into the Sea"
From a *Shahnama* of Firdawsi
Iran, c. 1444
f. 165b

The dynasty extended this poetic vision to other literary genres, such as the epic. The most important of these is the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi, the Iranian national epic that mixes history and myth in its fantastic recounting of the struggles of kings and heroes of pre-Islamic Iran (cat. no. 43, f. 165b). At least three illustrated royal Timurid copies have survived from the reign of Shahrukh as fragments or complete manuscripts:

A *Shahnama*, copied for Baysunghur in 1430, now in the Gulistan Palace Library, Tehran (no. 61);¹⁰¹

A *Shahnama*, copied for Ibrahim-Sultan around 1435, now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Ouseley Add.176);

A *Shahnama*, copied for Muhammad-Juki around 1440, now in the possession of the Royal Asiatic Society and on deposit at the British Library, London (Ms.239).

In the Persianate tradition the *Shahnama* was viewed as more than literature. It was also a political treatise, as it addressed deeply rooted conceptions of honor, morality, and legitimacy. Illustrated versions of it were considered desirable as expressions of the aspirations and policies of ruling elites in the Iranian world. This was particularly true for non-Iranian military conquerors like the Turkic Ghaznavids (977–1186), who commissioned the Firdawsi text, or the Mongols, whose great illustrated *Shahnama* (popularly known as the Demotte *Shahnama*) stood as an early model of collaboration between Persianate cultural traditions and Turco-Mongol political objectives.¹⁰² By means of contemporary style and the insertion of specific costume, architecture, and inscriptions, the illustrative programs of the *Shahnama* have historically reflected the attempts of various dynasties to assimilate themselves into the Iranian monarchical tradition. The Timurids followed suit and refined the text and its illustrations and occasionally even dramatically altered its illumination (cat. no. 44A–B). Baysunghur himself has been associated with a revision of the text and the preface that appeared in 1425, both generally credited to a collegium sponsored by the prince.¹⁰³

All executed for sons or grandsons of Shahrukh, these surviving royal *Shahnamas* from the early fifteenth century reflect in varying degrees the "stylized

cat. no. 44

cat. no. 44A–B

Two folios from a *Shahnama*
of Firdawsi
Herat, c. 1430 40





درف از پس بادی نشسته سوزن چاه کز آن بنو رانی طینه در بر درفش می و از بستم زن کس نشدین کار شد با درکش دگر راه از آن کا دفه اند رایشان حد زار و درستان می گفت هر که کسی از آن بمن بیا و شش جوگش شد نمای درین طلی کف شاید بن کوه سر برین یاد بر مشد و بدستان از آن می افتد ساعده روزنه و خورشید و آرد یکی راز حاکم سپید رکش بک آن میان و یکبار جان و در آب گوشت و کاش شت از بخت قاجار که در آب و بر پای هر کسی که بخت می ست شاید از آن خنده دوست زینک دین بود و یاد در نه ام نه و خنده ای من در بستم زای هر که و در آب کس و شش	منه بر در سر کشان بید و در پس از این و هر که یکی ماه شد که در جای حانه دل و گوشت و وحی من نه بستم هر که یک که نه چسب و نه و نه بر آن آتش از در و یک که نه نم کاوس برین و دونه و زرد و یک که با او از آن خزان خوش فست انده شاد از آن حاکم که شش پس از سرک اشان هر در آن شاه و کس و یک یکی رخت کس و یک	رشته کز آن برین کمر خوبی جاد است کس نه از می نه خرد و بیاد دارد و از سر و یک را برین بر بیا و یک نیاید که زای از اول هر تو که زای از اول روان که در و یک	رشته کز آن برین کمر خوبی جاد است کس نه از می نه خرد و بیاد دارد و از سر و یک را برین بر بیا و یک نیاید که زای از اول هر تو که زای از اول روان که در و یک
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cat. no. 45

"Tahmina Enters Rostam's Chamber"

Possibly from an Anthology

Heracl. 4.4.4

mime" perfected in illustrated poetries. Their illustrations along with the painting "Tahmina Enters Rustam's Chamber," possibly from a *Shahnama* (cat. no. 45), are among the great achievements of Persian painting; whether imaginative new creations of Timurid workshops or derived from traditional sources, they embody a vision so splendidly royal and artificial in effect that they transform the story in a distinctly

Timurid manner. The drama and thunder associated with earlier Mongol versions (fig. 41) has been replaced by coolly balletic orchestrations of man and beast in settings that range from the ritualistically imperial to the paradisaical (cat. no. 43, f. 67b). The hunt, an exercise traditionally symbolic of royal power, has become aristocratic play as horsemen move in a theatrical, stylized dance across a meadow (fig. 42); figures are

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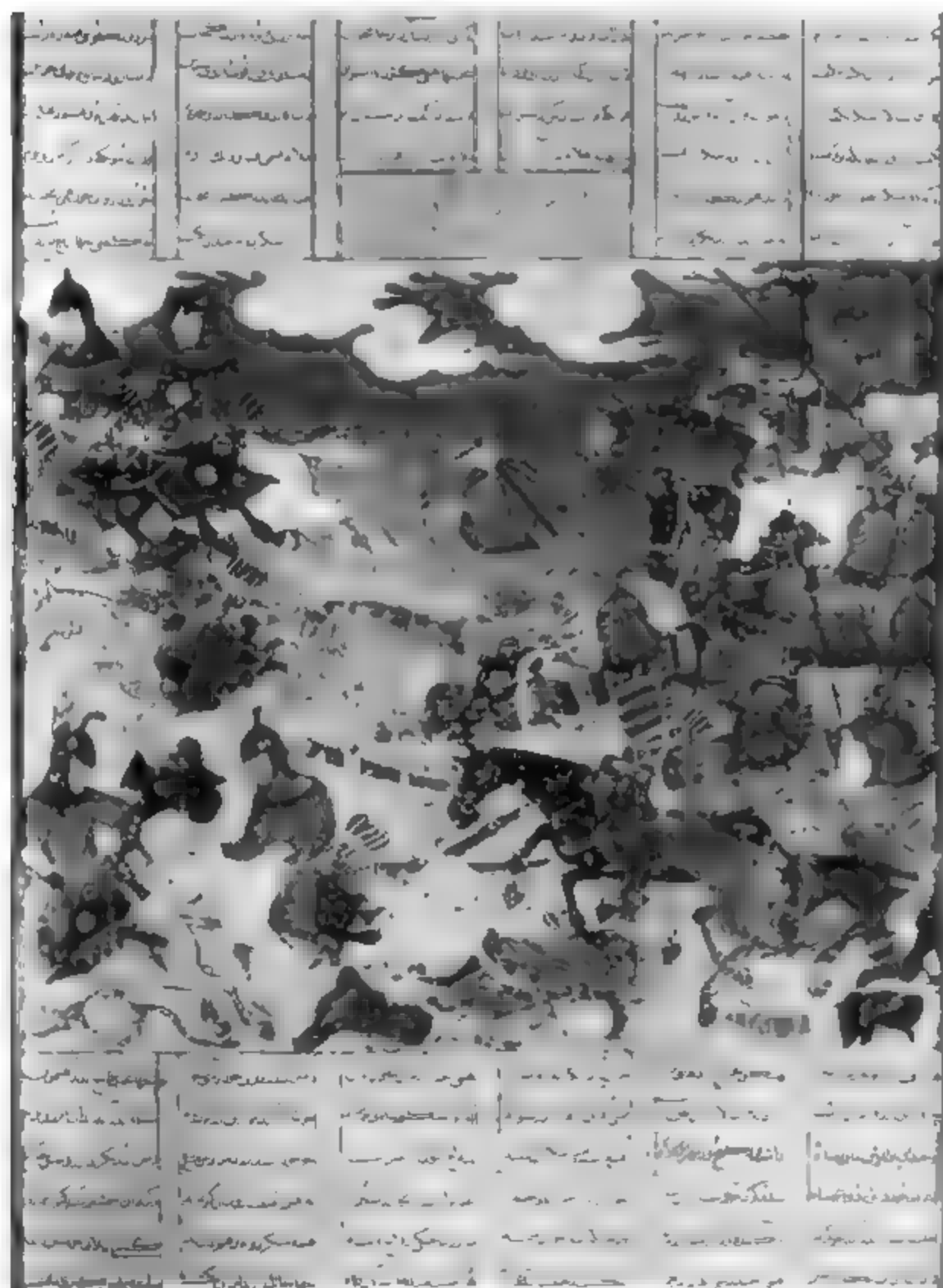


fig. 41

"Rashnavad Battling the Rums"
From a *Shahnama* of Firdausi
Tabriz, c. 1510
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
25 x 29 cm (9 7/8 x 11 3/8 in.)
Cambridge: Harvard University
Art Museums (Arthur M. Sackler
Museum), Wetzel Bequest, 1919.110



arranged in court like chess pieces, or sheathed in metal for battle (cat. no. 43, f. 278a), they move in rhymed groups over coral outcroppings and patterned landscapes beneath skies of scrolling clouds, their reserved expression banishing nearly all traces of volume, light, and shadow.

Other literary genres also eventually succumbed to the dynasty's preferred illustrative idiom. The Mirror for Princes genre—didactic texts intended to instruct rulers in the principles of statecraft—were necessary holdings for princely libraries, and the paintings in one such copy, a 1429 *Kalila u Dimna* (Kalila and Dimna) done for Baysunghur, perhaps represent the most brilliant realization of early Timurid pictorial principles for the book. In this work color exerts extraordinary power as a formal element: its frigid corals, blues, and purples create a world illuminated from an internal source (cat. no. 21, ff. 28b, 46b). So sharply delineated

cat. no. 46

"Abu Storms a Fortress"
From a *Kulliyat* written by Hafiz-i
Abru
Herat, dated A.H. 818–19
A.D. 1419–20
E. 1492

fig. 41

"Baysunghur Hunting"
Double-page frontispiece from a
Mahmama of Firdawsi copied for
Baysunghur ibn Shahrugh
Herat, dated Jumada I 811
A.D. January 1410
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
18 x 26 cm (7 x 10 1/4 in.)
Tehran, Golestan Palace Library, no. 61





cat. no. 41

"Suhrab Slain by Rostam"
From a *Shahname* of Firdausi
Iran, c. 1444
f. 67b

کمی به داری که آهسته یکسای شب بخوابد و خورشید	نهادم بر در کمانه سپیدی کمی بر میان کاه بر سپیدی	بر آویختن از جاسپ داشتند بر غم اندر از جاسپ داشتند	از انداز و گشتن کاهزار خیزد بر شش پای دست
	زیبای اندر آمدن پس به اگر هشتاد زن از غنای		



cat. no. 43 (opposite)

"Arasp Slain by Isfandiyar in the
Brazen Hold" (detail)
From a *Shahname* of Hrdawse
Iran, c. 1444
f. 178a



cat. no. 21

"The Lion Attacks the Bull Shanzaha"
From a *Kutla-i Jamia* of Nizamuddin
Abu'l Ma'ali Nasrullah
Herat, dated A.H. Muharram 851
(A.D. October 1429)
f. 46b

are the contents of each composition by both line and metallic hues that figural elements are effectively reduced to nuances of line in a surface diagram (cat. no. 21, f. 80a), eliminating any visual hierarchy among animate and inanimate components.

Even historical painting, an idiom normally bound to its own rules and earlier Mongol models, on occasion showed similar tendencies that resulted in dramatic shifts in both quality and visual power. The *Kulliyat-i tarikhi* (Anthology of history), dedicated to Shahrukh and dated 1415–16, replaced the mechanical

qualities of history painting with imaginative compositions finished in a cool, resonant palette (cat. no. 46, f. 169a). These features are supported throughout the text by a unifying framework of illumination that represents a virtual compendium of two-dimensional designs; while Islamic manuscript illumination ranks as perhaps the richest in history, the complex, imaginative interpretations of Timurid artists stand at the forefront of the tradition.

Timurid art at times seems to spring almost entirely from the art of the book, with illumination often

و طمان حای نام فرمانده و شطرا من ماسته ماس ار مکر و حیلت خویش پر دازم
 و پیام ملک در باب وی اس مثال بداد و بالنگر و چشم بدان موضع که سن کرد اندید بود
 رفت این شب بومان باز آمدند ز افغانا فتنه و اورا که خدا ان دج بر خود نهاد
 بود و در کین خدایست تم ندیدند است استر خود سے عهد و نرم نرم می نالید و
 او را و شنود ملک را خرد ملک با و جی خبر او رفت چون او را بدید و نمود که
 از ویر پدید که تو گشتی و زاعان کاه و نام تو هست او نام خود و ازان چه رکت
 و جواب داد که ایچ از من پرسیده می شود خود حال دلیلت بر انک موضع ابرار
 ایشان توانم بود ملک گت او و زیر ملک زاعا پت و صیاب سر و شیر معلوم باد
 که دتا ان نور با او که خرفقت زاعا گت خودم را از من بد کاسینه او را و
 که که موجب زاعا گت چون ان شب شما شپخون کردید ملک ما را بخواند و گت چه من
 درین واقع که ما را افاد من گتم ما را با لشکر بوم طاعت سعادت تواند بود و زور ایشان



cat. no. 21

"The Owls and the Crow"
 From a *Kalila u Dimna* of Nizamuddin
 Abul Ma'ali Nasrullah
 Herat, dated A.H. Muharram 815 A.D.
 October 429
 I. Roa

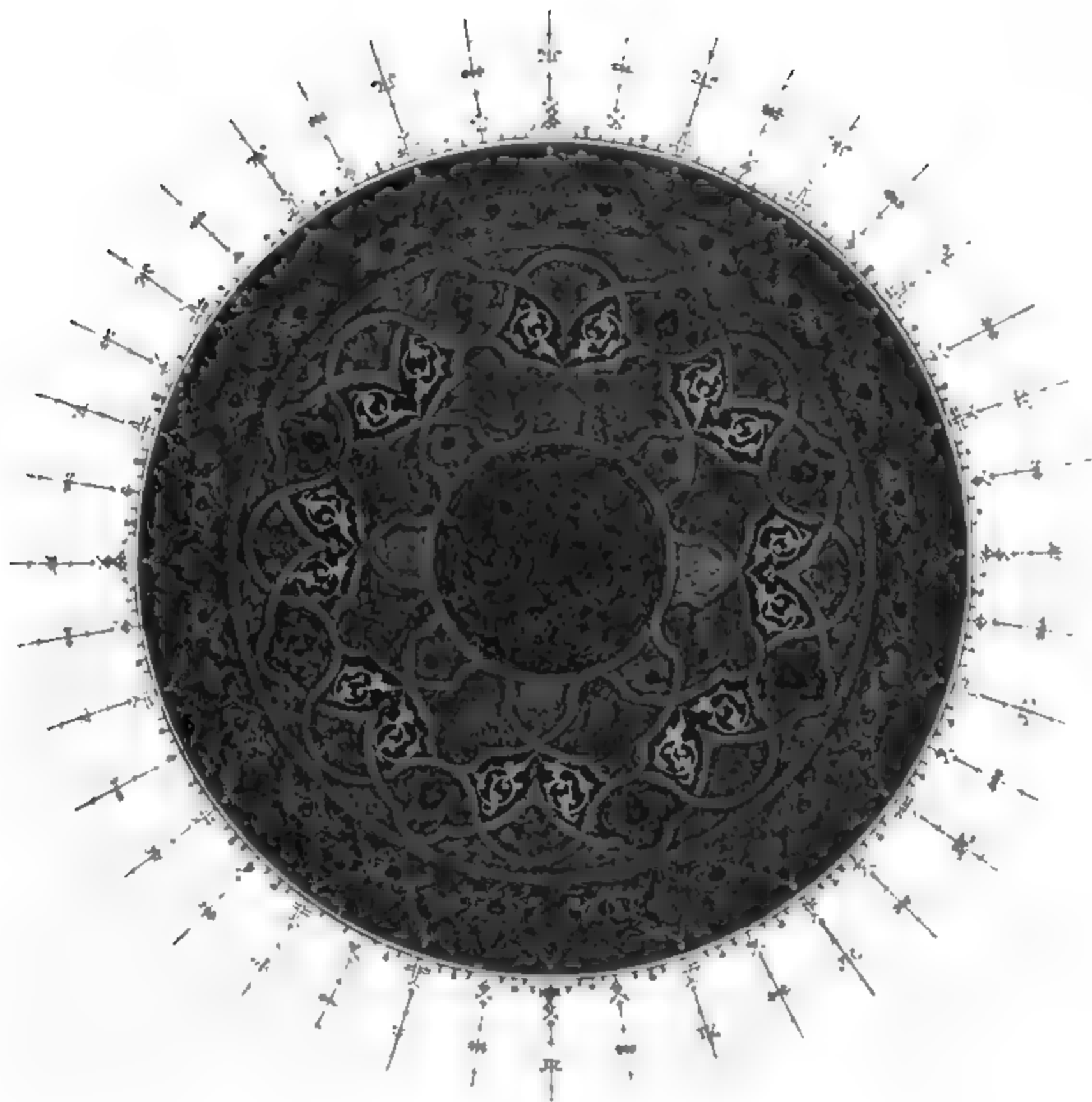
که قوت و ترک او فراخوار او از باشد اگر چنین است ما را اچانکه مقام صواب نباشد و نه کت
 جز این او از ملک را بسج رستی بوده است کت نه کت شاید که ملک بدین موجب مکان و م
 کرد اند و بکه آرد و از وطن خوف حرت کند که کت انداختی عقل تصنیف و افت مروت و کت
 دل ضعیف او از غنچه و در بعضی از امثال ایست که بر او از بی بند و چاره قوی قنات نیاید نمود
 چون قیصر روباه و طبل **حکایت** کت آورده اند که روباهی در پیشه طبل



ملوی در خستق افتاده و هرگاه که بادی چستی شاخ درخت بر طبل رسیدی او از پنهان گوش
 روباه آید چون روباه خفاست خداید و مابست او از بشنید طبع در پست که گوشت و پوست

۱۱۷

"The Fox and the Drum"
 From a *Kutub al-Din* of Nizāmuddin
 Abū'l-Ma'ālī Nasrullah
 Herat, dated A.H. Muharram 811
 (A.D. October 1429)
 f. 117b



Lat. no. 18

Debacha from a Dish of Amir
Khusraw Dihlawi
Shiraz, dated A.H. 814 (A.D. 1410-11)
L. 18



fig. 43
Illuminated double-page frontispiece
from a lost manuscript copied for
Baysunghur ibn Shahrukh
Herat, c. 1450
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
15.5 x 9 cm (6 1/8 x 3 1/2 in.)
Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library,
Ms. 120



providing a template for the kitabkhanas' efforts in other media. Luminous arabesques and geometric frames cradling titles and proclamations in works like Ibrahim-Sultan's *Diwan* of Amir Khusraw (cat. no. 18) or Baysunghur's double-page frontispiece from a lost manuscript (fig. 43) also appear in architectural decoration. Occasionally the transference was almost literal; placed among the hypnotic surfaces of Ulugh-Beg's madrasa at Samarqand is a monumental *debacha* (sunburst medallion) that duplicates in tile mosaic a form found in the double-page frontispiece in Iskandar-Sultan's 1410–11 *Anthology* (figs. 44–45). Correspondences across media can also be detected in the rare examples of metalwork attributable to Timurid patronage in the first half of the fifteenth century; two inlaid bronze penboxes show in the intricate density and elegance of their decoration a striking parallel to illumination done for Iskandar-Sultan at Shiraz and may well have been issued from his workshops (cat. nos. 47–48).¹⁰⁴



Fig. 44

Panel from the entrance room of the
madrasa of Ulugh Beg in Samarkand,
c. 1417–20
Tile mosaic



Fig. 45

Illuminated panel from the double-
page frontispiece of an *Anthology*
copied for Iskandar Sultan ibn
Umar-Shaykh
Shiraz, dated A.H. 813 (A.D. 1410–11)
19 x 13 cm (7 1/2 x 5 1/8 in.)
Lisbon, Calouste Gulbenkian
Foundation, LA 161, f. 3b



Timurid literary sources and paintings yield plentiful evidence of princely objects for this period, yet few examples of this rich tradition have survived. Intended to enhance royal life and prestige, these works, unlike books, which by language were specifically culture bound, were perhaps important not so much for their particular forms as for their broad, cross-cultural associations with a life of wealth and luxury. Drawing inspiration from both East and West, they transcended political and cultural barriers as acknowledged emblems of rule among princely classes in many lands.

Of the few objects inscribed with the names and titles of Timurid princes, those of Ulugh-Beg command special attention. A carved sandalwood box from his court, now one of the prized possessions of the treasury of the Topkapı Sarayı Museum, is of unrivaled quality. A carved filigree of lacv arabesque, woven

cat. no. 46

Penbox

Shiraz(?), c. 1400–1425

cat. no. 47

Penbox

Shiraz(?), c. 1400–1425





cat. no. 49

Carved wooden box of Ulugh-Beg ibn
Shahrukh
Central Asia, c. 1420–49

tightly across its surface, bears a writhing dragon medallion flanked by delicate, floating rosettes and inscribed cartouches (cat. no. 49). The box is further animated by a gold clasp, handles, and rivets as well as a meticulously inlaid polychrome geometric strip around the cover's edge, which recalls Timurid architectural decoration in mosaic tile. The interior is lined with a rare example of Timurid silk (see illustration p. 218). Its analogues to other arts—book illumination and Chinese-inspired drawing in particular—reemphasize the formal unity in decoration that characterizes royal work of this period in nearly all media.

Among Ulugh-Beg's objects the greatest distinction is generally accorded to his carved jade vessels. While a small jade casket of the prince Ala'uddawla ibn Baysunghur is known (cat. no. 50), Ulugh-Beg is the Timurid most intimately connected with the use of jade in royal circles. Returning from his 1424–25 campaign in the northeast against the Mughuls, the prince

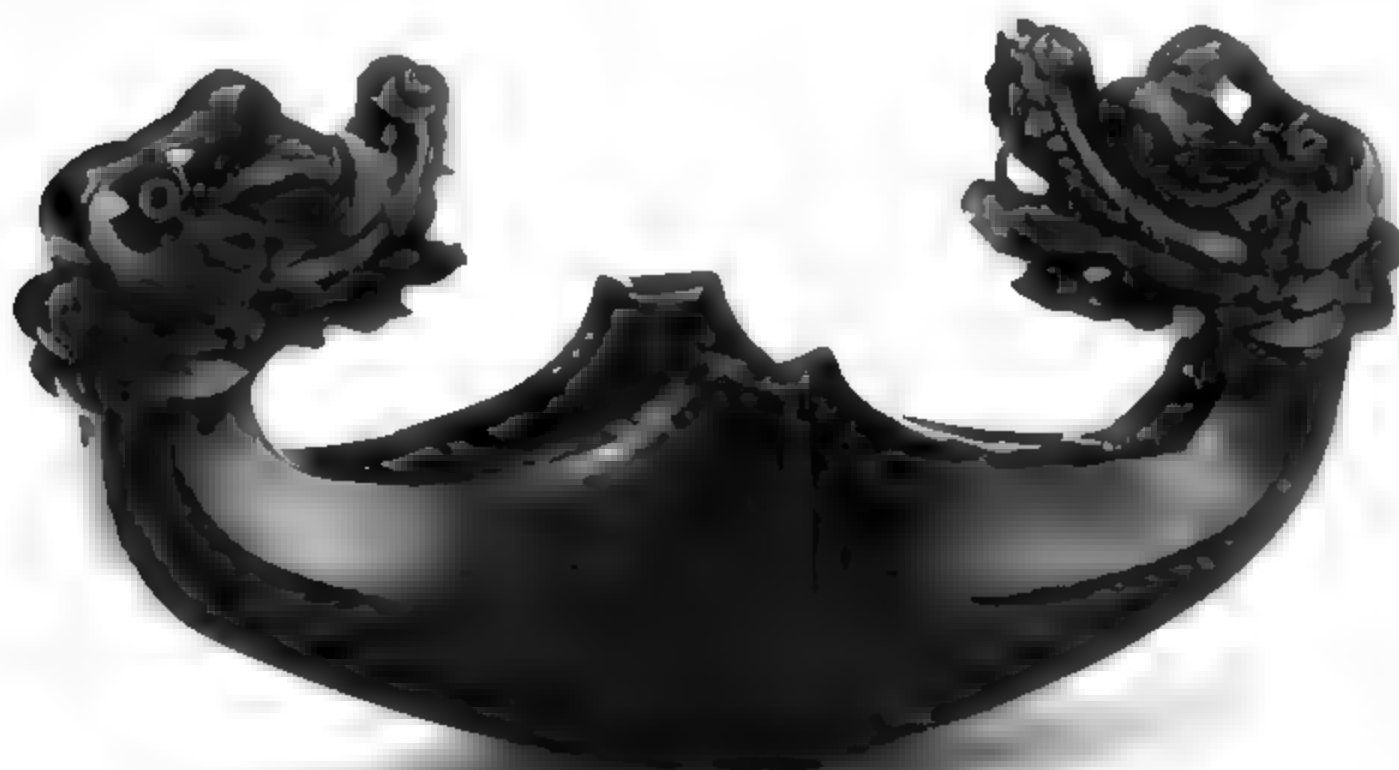


cat. no. 10

Casket of Ala uddawla ibn Baysunghur
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1450

ordered two thousand of his men to transport from Qarshi to Samarqand two large blocks of nephrite jade, one of which became the famous carved and inscribed tombstone of Timur at the Gur-i Amir.¹⁰⁵ Ulugh-Beg and other Timurid princes more typically used jade for jugs, cups, and bowls, oftentimes distinguished by dragon-headed handles that also appeared in jade on Timurid weapons (cat. nos. 51–52). There is no object that more forcefully conveys the imperial attributes of Ulugh-Beg's reign at Samarqand than an unusually large white jade jug (fig. 46) that bears his name and titles.¹⁰⁶ The most spectacular of all extant Timurid jades, it was greatly coveted by Ulugh-Beg's descendants, including the Mughals of India.

Much of the Timurid interest in these vessels can be traced to Chinese jades and other objects. For example, in 1445 Ulugh-Beg received jade vessels as well as a dragon-headed spear from the Ming court.¹⁰⁷ Objects



cat. no. 51

Quilon block
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1400–1450



cat. no. 52

Dragon-handled cup

Iran or Central Asia, c. 1400–1450



fig. 46

Jug executed for Ulugh-Beg ibn
Shahrukh

Iran or Central Asia c. 1420–49

Jade (nephrite)

Height 26.5 cm (10 1/2 in.)

Lisbon, Calouste Gulbenkian
Foundation, 128

from the lands of the Golden Horde in southern Russia represent another little-explored influence. A number of fourteenth-century gold cups with figured handles, which are formally related to Timurid jade cups, have been recovered by Soviet archaeologists from Golden Horde sites at Berke Saray and Batu Saray on the Volga. The Timurid vessels may represent yet another continuation of an earlier Mongol practice.

As the Timurids' patronage of luxury objects and their enthusiastic adoption of the Persianate literary tradition were integral to their creation of a princely ethos that effectively furthered dynastic aspirations, so too was the preoccupation of the royal house with the sciences. Through patronage and direct participation princes made them a royal activity. Astrology, for example, had long played an influential role among rulers in the Near East and Central Asia prior to the fifteenth century, and the Timurids were no different in their acknowledgment of its importance. The historian Mirkhwand recounts a story in which Baysunghur, on hearing from his astrologers that he would not reach the age of forty, became disconsolate and turned to wine, the cause of his premature death in 1433 at the age of thirty-six.¹⁰⁸

The leading exponents of science in the ruling house were Iskandar-Sultan and Ulugh-Beg. A personal horoscope done for the former on April 18, 1411, when the prince was twenty-seven years old,¹⁰⁹ is perhaps the most eloquent testament to the place of astrology in Timurid life (cat. no. 36, ff. 18b–19a). Based on astronomical observations made at the time of his birth, the contents forecast good health, long life, and victories in wars and ominously warn of hostile relations envious of his success. The heart of the manuscript lies in an intricate double-page painting depicting the position of the heavens at the moment of his birth; a wheeling cosmos embraces astrological houses, personifications of the planets, and signs of the zodiac, their colors deeply resonant against a starry sky ablaze with arabesques and stylized clouds.¹¹⁰

CHITRAP
cat. no. 36

Double-page painting from the
Horoscope of Iskandar-Sultan ibn
Timar-Shaykh
Shiraz, dated A.H. 22 Dhu'l-Hijja 813
A.D. 18 April 1411
ff. 18b–19a

cat. no. 36 detail



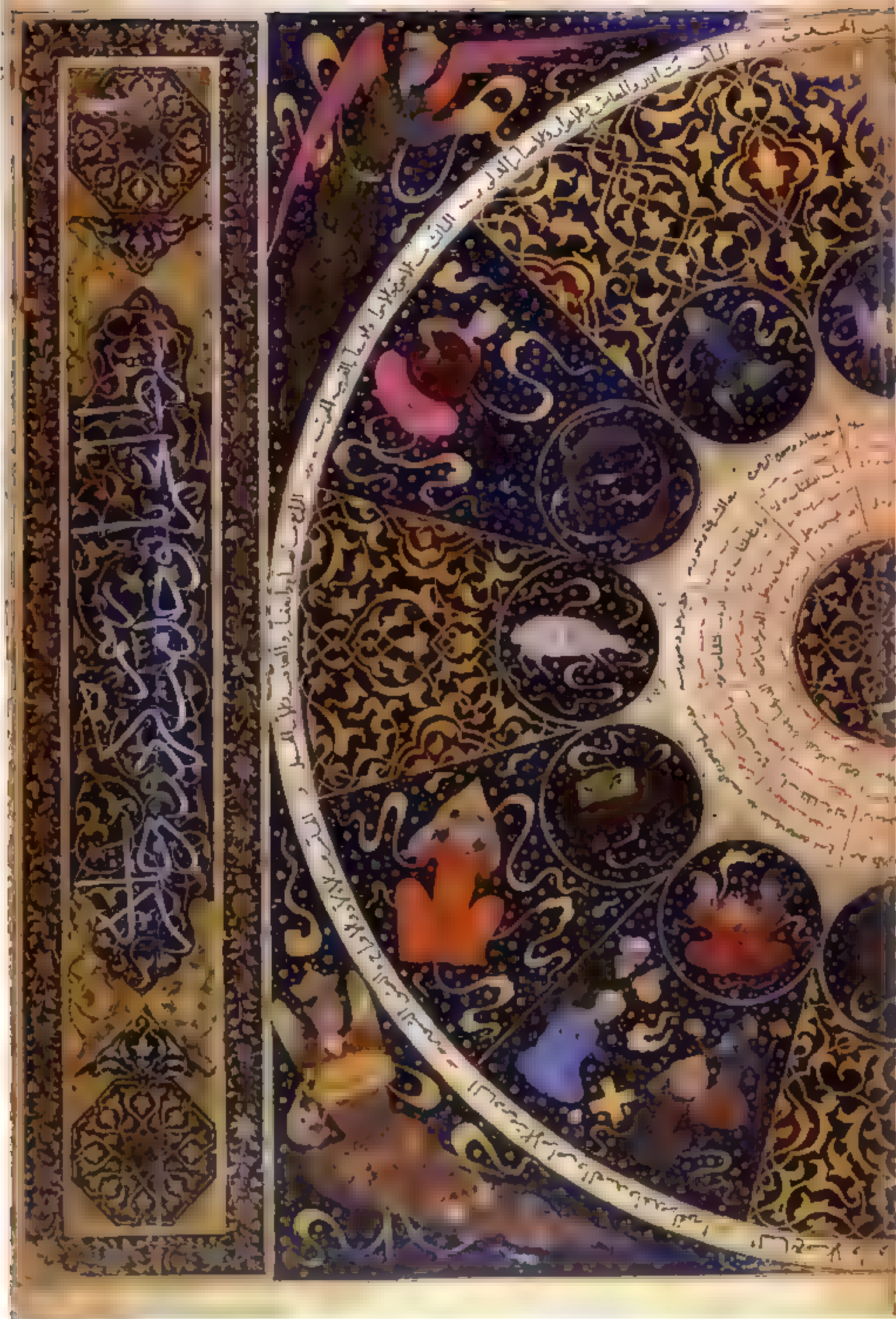






fig. 4

"Nasiruddin Tusi and Colleagues at
Work in the Maragha Observatory"
From a Scientific Anthology

Shiraz, c. 1410

Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper

24 x 14.8 cm (9 7/8 x 5 7/8 in.)

Istanbul University Library, F.14.8
L.11b

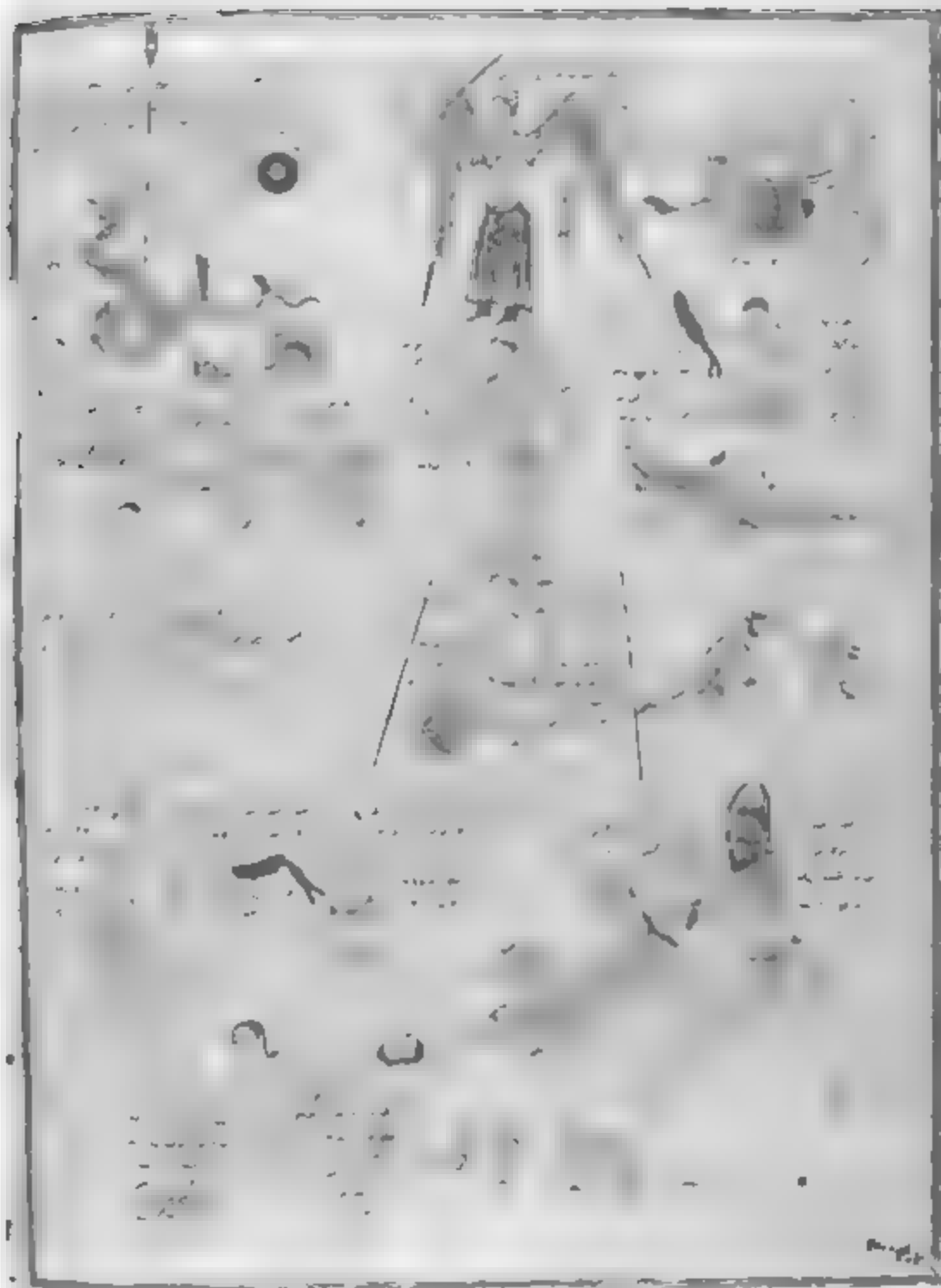


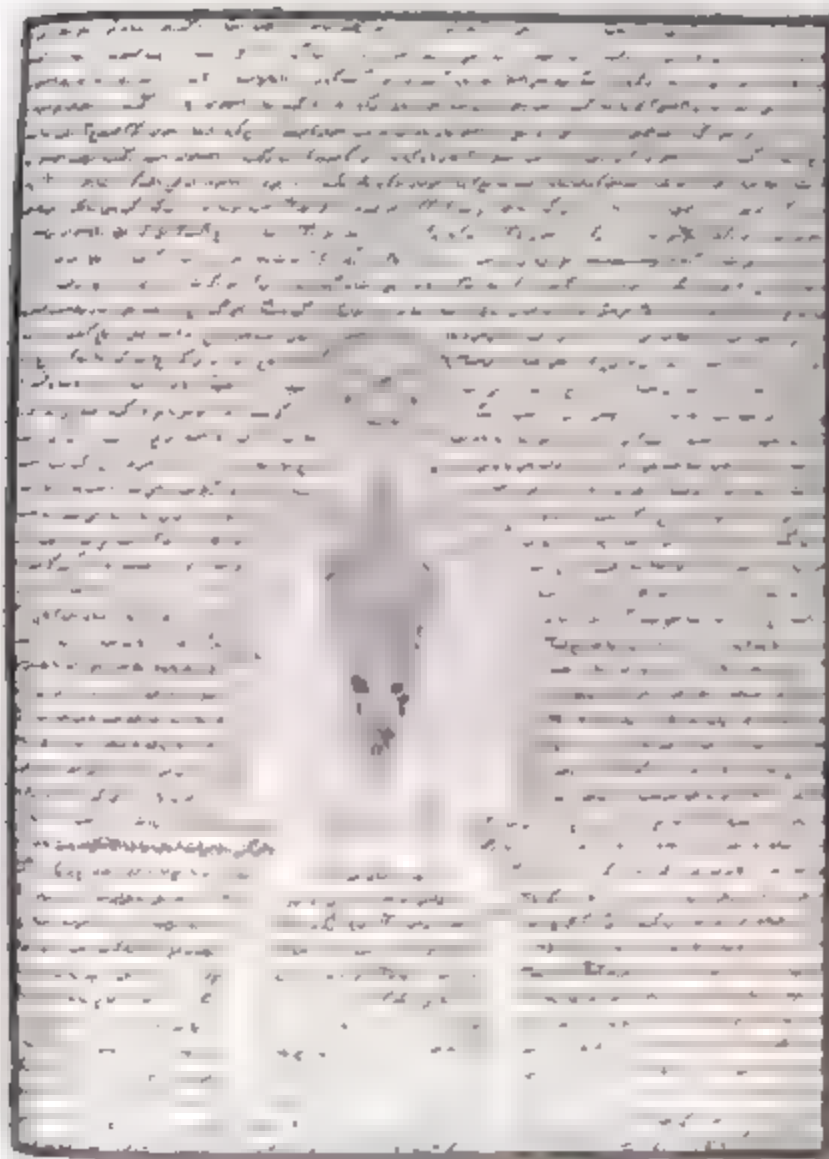
fig. 4b

Amuletic designs for ornamental stones
from a scientific manuscript copied for
Iskandar Sultan ibn Umar Shavkh
Isfahan, c. 1411

Opaque watercolor and ink on paper

48 x 35.5 cm (18 7/8 x 14 in.)

Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, B.411,
L.159b



The *Durrat al-taj li-ghurra ad-diba* (The pearl of the crown for the finest brocade), an encyclopedia of philosophical sciences, is typical of Iskandar-Sultan's patronage of scientific manuscripts (cat. no. 53). Astronomical and cosmographic components were also prominent in a number of Iskandar's compendia, such as the *Jami' al-sultani*, which contains a cosmography credited to him, and a 1410–11 scientific anthology with an introductory painting of royal astrologers making calculations in a domed chamber (fig. 47).¹¹¹ The full range of his curiosity, however, unfolds with a large encyclopedic compendium of 1413 (now bound into an album with a variety of other material compiled for Shahrukh). Included among the compendium's contents are astronomical charts, wheels, and tables; a page of colored figural drawings intended as amuletic designs for ornamental stones (fig. 48); a large-scale anatomical drawing (fig. 49); and a double-

fig. 49

Anatomical drawing from a scientific manuscript executed for Iskandar Sulaym ibn Umar-Shaykh
Isfahan, c. 1413
Ink on paper
48 x 35.5 cm (18 7/8 x 14 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, B.471,
L. 159a



cat. no. 53

From the *Durrat al-taj li-ghurra ad-diba* of Qutbuddin Mahmud ibn Mas'ud al-Shirazi
Shiraz, c. 1410
L. 110b

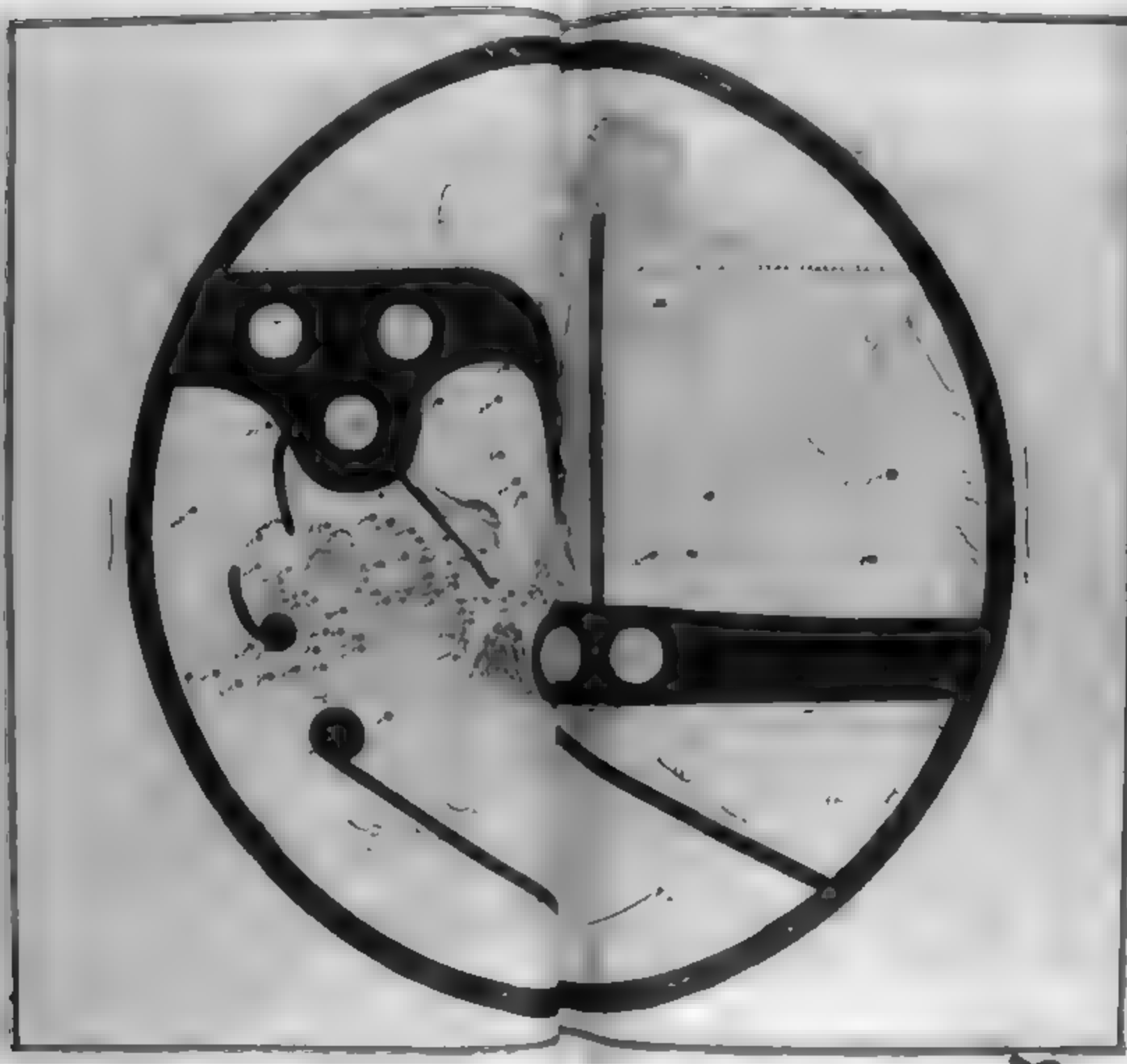


fig. 50

Map of the Timurid world from a scientific manuscript executed for Iskandar Sultan ibn Umar-Shaykh Isfahan, c. 1415
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
48 x 33 cm (19 x 14 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, B.412, ff. 141b-142a

page circular map of the Timurid world featuring oceans, mountains, and important cities (fig. 50).¹¹²

As serious as Iskandar's scientific commitment was, it was surpassed by Ulugh-Beg's passionate interest in astronomy. His position as the reigning scholar prince of the royal house was ensured when he constructed his most renowned structure, the observatory at Samarqand. Perhaps inspired by the great Il-Khanid observatory at Maragha, which he saw as a child, it was completed by 1428/29 on a hill outside the city. Once a three-story circular structure forty-eight meters in diameter, now only its foundations survive. Soviet excavations have revealed an enormous meridian transit instrument, calibrated in degrees, in its bowels, which was used for calculating the altitudes of celestial bodies; its angle of curvature yields a radius of nearly

forty meters and has been characterized as an extreme example of an attempt to gain precision by great size.¹¹¹ Also among the equipment used there by the prince and his astronomers would have been globes like the 1430 example preserved in the British Museum, objects often of considerable beauty used for teaching as well as calculations (cat. no. 34). According to the historian Abdul-Razzaq Samarqandi, murals in the observatory featured the nine heavens, the nine heavenly spheres (with degrees, minutes, seconds, and tenths of seconds), the epicycles, the seven planets, the fixed stars, and the terrestrial globe divided into climates, with mountains, seas, and deserts.¹¹⁴

At this site Ulugh-Beg assembled and worked closely with a staff of astronomers and mathematicians, including the celebrated Jamshid Ghiyathuddin al-Kashi, a former protege of Iskandar-Sultan at Shiraz, and Qazizada Rumi. By supporting such activities, the prince continued the hallowed tradition of Mongol patronage of scientific research in Iran. Jamshid's work on numerical analysis, for example, in his 1427 *Miftah al-hisab* (The key to calculation) was dedicated to Ulugh-Beg, and it preceded similar breakthroughs in Europe by nearly two centuries.¹¹⁵ A letter of Jamshid to his father offers a glimpse of the personalities and scientific discussions that occurred at Ulugh-Beg's court and observatory and reveals the prince as an active participant in these debates:

One sees the (royal) presence (Ulugh-Beg) exhibiting the extreme of generosity and courtesy. He wants to show the utmost kindness and noble generosity of courtesy to the extent that sometimes in the madrasa between his (royal) presence and one of the students, (who is) asking about a problem from any science, there may be so much (mutual) refutation and give and take as cannot be described. This is because he decreed and directed that until a scientific problem penetrates his mind it is not established, and obsequious flattery should not be indulged in, and if sometimes someone accepts blindly he embarrasses him (by saying) you are making us out as ignorant. And for the sake of examination of the problem he may (intentionally) insert a mistake into the middle (of the argument). So soon as anyone accepts it he reproaches and shames him.¹¹⁶

cat. no. 34

Globe

Iran, dated A.H. 834 (A.D. 1430-31)



صُورَةُ الْفَرَسِ الْأَعْظَمِ عَلَى مَا بَرَى فِي الْأَيْتِمَاءِ



192

at 1000

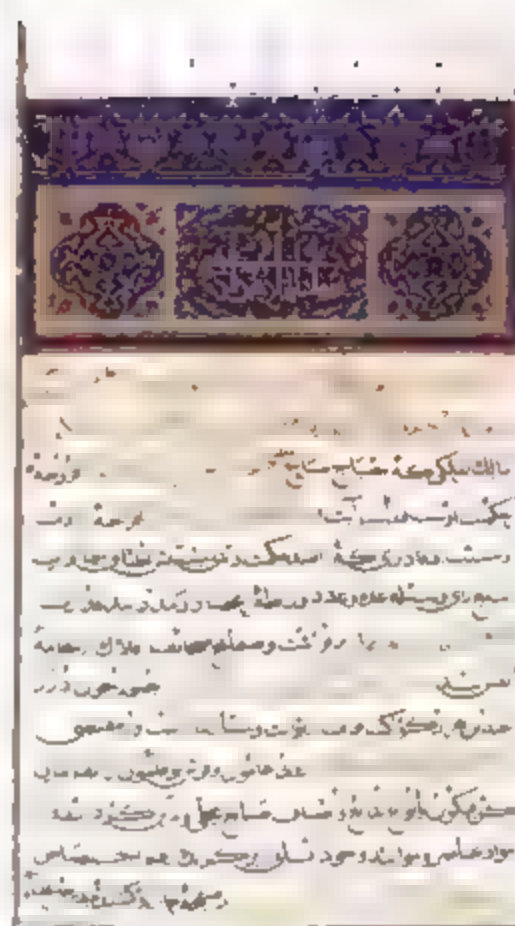
"The Constellation Pegasus, al-faras al-Azam."
From a *Suwar al-kawakib al-thalatha* of
al-Buhārī
Samarqand 2, c. 1410-40
19th

Ulugh-Beg also commissioned and acquired many books on astronomy. The prince and his astronomers jointly composed astronomical tables, the famed *Zij-i Gurkani* (The Gurkanid ephemeris) (cat. no. 55), which were conceived as a replacement of earlier tables by Nasiruddin Tusi for a Mongol patron. Babur wrote in the sixteenth century that Ulugh-Beg's tables were still "used all over the world."¹⁷ Another surviving manuscript from Ulugh-Beg's library is a copy in Arabic of the *Suwar al-kawakib al-thabita* (Book of fixed stars) of Abdul-Rahman al-Sufi, a tenth-century Iranian astronomer; the work, a critical evaluation of earlier Arabic treatises based on Ptolemy, was illustrated with pictures of constellations (cat. no. 56).¹⁸ Seventy-four color drawings reveal lively, carefully articulated figural personifications of classical prototypes, each rendered in Timurid guise or derived from the fabulous beasts found in Chinese-inspired drawings.

The facade of royal might and patronage that characterized Shahrukh's reign could neither prevent nor conceal the internal intrigues and rebellions that plagued Timurid political life, and his death in 1447 triggered yet another struggle for the throne. Amidst shifting allegiances and betrayals, Ulugh-Beg actually seized control of the realm for a brief period, entering Herat in 1448. In an extraordinary gesture that seemed to reassert the primacy of Samarqand and the lands where Timur's legacy echoed strongest, Ulugh-Beg removed Shahrukh's body from the madrasa of Gawharshad and sent it on to be interred in Timur's mausoleum. The prince's final clash pitted him against his son Abdul-Latif, who in 1449 defeated his father's army near the suburb Dimishq (Damascus) outside Samarqand. For a prince whose life had straddled both pillars of Timurid legitimacy, Ulugh-Beg's death in October 1449 was ironically appropriate: Abdul-Latif instigated a petitioner, whose father had been killed by command of Ulugh-Beg, to file a claim to avenge the death according to the dictates of the shari'a; the execution was then officially ordered by the newly proclaimed Chingizid shadow khan at Samarqand.¹⁹

cat. no. 56

"The Constellation Ara (al-Majmaru)"
From a *Suwar al-kawakib al-thabita* of
al-Sufi
Samarqand (?), c. 1430-40
f. 141b



cat. no. 55

Opening page of the *Zij-i Gurkani* of
Ulugh-Beg ibn Shahrukh
Samarqand (?), c. 1411
f. 1a





Entrance portal of the Gur-i Amir
complex — 151
Samarkand, c. 1400–1404

NOTES

1. Ibn Arabshah, *Tamerlane or Timur the Great Amir, from the Arabic Life of Ahmed ibn Arabshah*, trans. J. H. Saunders (London: Luzac & Co., 1916), p. 233.
2. Taken from the translation and notes by J. M. Rogers of "V. V. Barthold's Article O Pogrebenu Timura ('The burial of Timur')," *Iran* 12 (1974): 65-87.
3. Ibn Arabshah, *Tamerlane*, pp. 244-45.
4. Technically the armies the princes commanded were not their own but at Timur's disposal. During Timur's invasion of India in 1398-99, for example, the army of his son Shahrukh accompanied the conqueror, while the prince himself remained behind in Khurasan. Beatrice Manz, "Politics and Control under Tamerlane," Ph.D. diss. (Harvard University, 1983), pp. 170-79.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 340-49.
6. "Mir Dawlatshah Samarqandi's *Tadhkirat al-shu'ara*," in Wheeler Thackston, *A Century of Princes: Sources on Timurid History and Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, in press).
7. H. R. Roemer, "The Successors of Timur," in *The Cambridge History of Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 6: 100.
8. Manz, "Politics and Control under Tamerlane," p. 339-40.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 357-58. For a discussion of the *ayyughal*, see Maria Eva Subtelny, "The Poetic Circle at the Court of the Timurid Sultan Husain Baiqara, and Its Political Significance," Ph.D. diss. (Harvard University, 1979), p. 71 and Terry Allen, *Timurid Herat* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1983), pp. 42-43.
10. "Dawlatshah," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.
11. Bertold Spuler, *The Muslim World. A Historical Survey*, trans. F. R. C. Bagley (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), 2: 69; Roemer, "The Successors of Timur," 101-5.
12. John E. Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," typescript, 1986, p. 49.
13. A. K. S. Lambton, "Early Timurid Theories of State: Habz-i Abru and Nizam al-Din Sami," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 50 (1978): 1-9; John E. Woods, "The Rise of Timurid Historiography," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 46, no. 2 (April 1987): 99, 103.
14. See, for example, the early views of P. R. Martin, *The Miniature Paintings and Painters of Persia, India, and Turkey* (1912; reprint, London: Holland Press, 1968), pp. 35-40.
15. The major Timurid sources for the reign of Shahrukh are discussed in Woods, "Timurid Historiography."
16. Linda Komaroff, "The Epigraphy of Timurid Coinage: Some Preliminary Remarks," *American Numismatic Society: Museum Notes* 31 (1986): 216-20.
17. Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," pp. 43-46; V. V. Barthold, *Ulugh-Beg*, vol. 2 of *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, trans. V. and T. Minorsky (reprint, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), pp. 16-37.
18. Allen, *Timurid Herat*, p. 39.
19. "Dawlatshah," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.
20. Barthold, *Ulugh-Beg*, pp. 36-37.
21. Mansura Haidar, "The Mongol Traditions and Their Survival in Central Asia (XIV-XV c.)," in *Central Asiatic Journal* 28, nos. 1-2 (1984): 74; Bernard O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers in assoc. with Undena Publications, 1987), p. 89.
22. Ibn Arabshah, *Tamerlane*, p. 299.
23. Khwandamir, cited in Major D. Price, *Chronological Retrospect or Memoirs of the Principal Events of Mohammedan History (from the Death of the Arabian Legislator, to the Accession of the Emperor Akbar, and the Establishment of the Moghul Empire in Hindustan)* (London: J. Booth, 1811-12), p. 340.
24. O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan*, pp. 119-27; Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilber, *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 1: 328-31.
25. V. Minorsky, trans., *Calligraphers and Painters. A Treatise by Qadi Ahmad, Son of Mir Murshid* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery Publications, Smithsonian Institution, 1959), pp. 69-71.
26. "Khwandamir's *Habib al-siyar*," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.
27. S. E. Ratia, *Mechet 'Bibi-Khanyim* (Moscow, 1930), p. 34, figs. 22-23, where an inscription naming Ulugh-Beg is reproduced. Trans. Wheeler Thackston. The authors are grateful to Dr. O. Akimushkin of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Leningrad, for the reference to the inscription. See also Dietrich Brandenburg, *Samarqand. Studien zur islamischen Baukunst in Uzbekistan (Zentralasien)* (Berlin: Bruno Hessling Verlag, 1972).
28. O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan*, p. 80.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 119-27, 149-52, 167-75; Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 1: 302-11, 328-31; Terry Allen, *A Catalogue of the Toponyms and Monuments of Timurid Herat*, Studies in Islamic Architecture, no. 1 (Cambridge, Mass.: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, 1981), pp. 113-15, 158-61, 177.
30. O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan*, pp. 33-78; Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 1: 73-135 and especially 137-73.
31. O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan*, pp. 167-77. For the inscriptions on the royal tombstones in the mausoleum, see C. E. Yate, "Inscriptions Formerly in the Mausalla of Herat," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1926): 290-94.
32. Lisa Golombek, *The Timurid Shrine at Gazur Gah*, Art and Archaeology Occasional Paper, no. 15 (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, 1969); Bernard O'Kane, "The Madrasa al-Ghiyasiyya at Khargird," *Iran* 14 (1976): 79-92; Golombek, "The Chronology of Turbat-i Shaikh Jam," *Iran* 9 (1971): 27-44. See also O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan*, pp. 85-86, and Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 1: 62-63.
33. One exception to this disinterest in the *hajj* was the presentation of a *kuwa* (covering for the Ka'ba) to Mecca by Shahrukh around 1421. The Shrine of Imam Riza was apparently never intended to function as a replacement for the distant Ka'ba but likely served as a closer alternative, hence its designation as the "threshold of the Ka'ba." Many pilgrimage sites in Iran, in fact, had an equivalent value. The Timurid development of the shrine was discussed in a lecture by Lisa Golombek, Harvard University, 18 October 1982; O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan*, pp. 119-27.
34. Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, *Baburnama*, trans. Annette Susannah Beveridge (London: Luzac & Co., 1971), pp. 78-79.
35. For the Ulugh-Beg madrasa, see Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 1: 263-65.
36. Roemer, "The Successors of Timur," pp. 133-36; B. S. Amoretti, "Religion in the Timurid and Safavid Periods," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, 6: 610-14.
37. Khwandamir, *Tarikh-i Habib al-Siyar* (Tehran, 1313/1954-55), 3: 615-17.
38. O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan*, pp. 89-92.
39. Allen, *Timurid Herat*, pp. 38-39.
40. Jean Aubin, "Le Mecenat Timouride à Chiraz," *Studia Islamica* 7 (1957): 78-81. The text is now preserved at Cambridge University, Ms. Browne, H(5)7, ff. 44b-49a.
41. British Library, Add 27261, ff. 145b-148a, 504b-539a. The authors thank M. I. Waley for this information.
42. Aubin, "Le Mecenat Timouride," pp. 85-88; Woods, "Timurid Historiography," p. 91.

43. T. Gander, "Note on an Unknown Poem of Haidar in Uighur Characters," *A Locust's Leg. Studies in Honor of S. H. Taqizadeh* (London: Percy Lund, Humphries & Co., 1961), pp. 64-69.
44. "Dawlatshah," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.
45. Barthold, *Uluġ Beg*, pp. 43-44, 85-86.
46. *Ibid.*, pp. 125-28, Roemer, "The Successors of Timur," p. 134.
47. Barthold, *Uluġ Beg*, pp. 114-15.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 125-26.
49. Marie-Rose Séguy, *The Miraculous Journey of Mahomet: Miraj Nameh* (New York: George Braziller, 1977).
50. This outline of historical works is taken from Woods, "Timurid Historiography," pp. 84-85.
51. *Ibid.*, pp. 96-99.
52. Richard Ertinghausen, "An Illuminated Manuscript of Hafiz-i Abru in Istanbul, Part 1," *Kunst des Orients* 2 (1955): 30-44.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
54. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Suppl. Pers. 1013; see Ernst Grube and Eleanor Sims, "The School of Herat from 1400 to 1450," in Basil Gray, ed., *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia: 14th-16th Centuries* (Boulder: Shambala, 1979), p. 150.
55. Woods, "Timurid Genealogy," pp. 1-17 and table 3; Emil Esin, "The Bakhsh in the 14th to 16th Centuries," in Gray, ed., *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia*, pp. 290-92.
56. Woods, "Timurid Historiography," pp. 99-106.
57. An unillustrated copy of this text was made for Baysunghur ibn Shahrukh and is now in the Kerr Collection; see B. W. Robinson, "Unillustrated Manuscripts," in *Islamic Painting and the Arts of the Book*, ed. Robinson (London: Faber & Faber, 1976), pp. 296-97.
58. Woods, "Timurid Historiography," p. 105.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
60. Eleanor Sims, "The Garrett Manuscript of the Zafar-Name: A Study in Fifteenth-Century Timurid Patronage," Ph.D. diss. (Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1973), pp. 64-65.
61. "Khwandamir," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.
62. "Dawlatshah," in *ibid.*
63. Barthold, *Uluġ Beg*, p. 75.
64. Roemer, "The Successors of Timur," p. 137.
65. Thomas Woodward Lewis, Jr., "Painting at Herat under Baysunghur ibn Shahrukh," Ph.D. diss. (Harvard University, 1985), pp. 36-47; Mirkhwand, *Rawzat al-Safa* (Tehran, 1319/1960-61), 6: 635.
66. Barthold, *Uluġ Beg*, p. 81.
67. *Ibid.*, pp. 202-3.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
69. Topkapı Sarayı Library, B.415, f. 159a, see also "The House of Timur: Sultan-Iskandar's View," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.
70. Aubin, "Le Mécénat Timouride," p. 84.
71. Roemer, "The Successors of Timur," p. 104.
72. O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan*, pp. 83-84.
73. Allen, *Timurid Herat*, pp. 18-22.
74. E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), 1: 400; I. H. Siddiqui, "Influence and Prestige of the Sultan of Delhi in India and the Neighboring Countries, with Special Reference to Central Asia—Fifteenth Century," *Central Asiatic Journal* 29, nos. 1-2 (1985): 98-120.
75. Joseph F. Fletcher, "China and Central Asia, 1368-1884," in *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations*, ed. J. K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 206-16. Both Timur and Shahrukh were enlisted in the official Ming history (*Mingshi*) as tributaries, but this was merely a reflection of the Chinese view of all foreign states as vassals. Official Chinese annals recorded all gifts as tribute, regardless of whether they were meant as such, and counterfeited embassies whose trade motives were an open secret were encouraged by the Ming court.
76. Emilia Vasilevich Bretschneider, *Medieval Researches from Eastern Asiatic Sources* (London: K. Paul Trübner, 1910), 2: 240-83.
77. "Ghiyathuddin Naqqash's Report on a Timurid Mission to China," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.
78. Allen, *Timurid Herat*, p. 20.
79. Goldenbek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 1: 177-78.
80. "Babur Mirza's *Baburnama*: A Visit to Herat," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.
81. Babur, *Baburnama*, trans. Beveridge, p. 80.
82. Subtelny, "The Poetic Circle," pp. 149-51.
83. Dawlatshah, *Tadhkiratu sh-shu'ara*, ed. E. G. Browne (London: Luzac & Co., 1901), p. 350.
84. "Dawlatshah," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.
85. *Ibid.*
86. *Ibid.* The allusion refers to one of the many legendary feats ascribed to Alexander the Great in Muslim tradition. When Alexander encountered a people threatened by the Gog and Magog (enemies of the Kingdom of God in the Old Testament), he contained the two by building a dam. Iskandar proclaims himself as splendid and mighty as Alexander's dam, and while others are overwhelmed by the Gog and Magog of worldly events, he possesses the power to dam them off. The authors thank Wheeler Thackston for his exegesis of this verse. See Mir Ali-Sher Nawai, *Majalis al-nafa'is. Turf Sixteenth-Century Persian Translations*, ed. A. Hekmat (Tehran, 1945), p. 125, and Minorsky, *Calligraphers and Painters*, p. 69, for examples of Baysunghur's verse.
87. "Dawlatshah," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.
88. V. Minorsky, "A Civil and Military Review in Fars in 881/1476," in *The Turks, Iran, and the Caucasus in the Middle Ages* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1978), p. 151. For the importance and role of Persepolis in Iranian Islamic kingship, see Michael Rogers, *The Spread of Islam* (Oxford: Elsevier-Phaidon, 1976), pp. 10-11.
89. "Dawlatshah," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.
90. See Appendix II.
91. Topkapı Sarayı Library, H.2310, see Z. Togan, *On the Miniatures in Istanbul Libraries*, Publications of the Faculty of Letters of the University of Istanbul, N. 1504 (Istanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1961), p. 27; Lenz, "Painting at Herat," pp. 171-13, 475-80.
92. Priscilla Soucek, "The Arts of Calligraphy," in Gray, ed., *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia*, pp. 15-16.
93. Minorsky, *Calligraphers and Painters*, p. 66.
94. Basil Gray, *Persian Painting* (Geneva: Skira, 1961), pp. 74-79.
95. *Ibid.*, pp. 84-86.
96. E. Wellesz, "Eine Handschrift aus der Blütezeit Frühimuridischer Kunst," *Wiener Beiträge zur Kunst und Kulturgeschichte Asiens* 10 (1936): 3-24.
97. Norah Titley, *Persian Miniature Painting and Its Influence on the Art of Turkey and India* (Austin: University of Texas Press in cooperation with the British Library, 1983), pp. 223-34.
98. Priscilla Soucek, "Illustrated Manuscripts of Nizami's *Khamsa*, 1386-1482," Ph.D. diss. (Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1971), pp. 368-89.
99. Basil Gray, "The Chinoiserie Elements in the Paintings in the Istanbul Albums," in *Between Iran and China. Paintings from Four*

Istanbul Albums, ed. Ernst Grube and Eleanor Sims, *Colloquia on Art and Archaeology in Asia*, no. 10 (London: University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, Percival David Foundation, 1980), pp. 85–89.

100. B. W. Robinson, "Prince Baysunghor's Nizami: A Speculation," *Art Orientalis* 2 (1957): 386–87.

101. Basil Gray, *An Album of Miniatures and Illuminations from the Baysunghori Manuscript of the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi—Preserved in the Imperial Library, Tehran* (Tehran, 1971). Another copy of the *Shahnameh* in the Malek Library in Tehran (no. 6531), although unillustrated, was copied for Baysunghur ibn Shahrukh in 853/1429–30 and is bound together with a copy of the *Khamsa* of Nizami, see Ernst Grube, "The Spencer and Gulestan Shah Nama," *Parthenon* 22 (1964): 21.

102. Marianna S. Simpson, *The Illustration of an Epic: The Earliest Shahnameh Manuscripts* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1979); Oleg Grabar and Sheila Blair, *Epic Images and Contemporary History: The Illustrations of the Great Mongol Shahnameh* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

103. J. Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature*, trans. P. Van Poopra-Hope (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1968), p. 170.

104. Glenn D. Lowry, "Iskandar Mirza and Early Timurid Metalwork," *Orientalia* 17, no. 8 (1986): 12–21.

105. Barthold, *Ulugh-Beg*, pp. 100–101.

106. Ernst Grube, "Notes on the Decorative Arts of the Timurid Period," in *Gurrañjamañ-jarika. Studi in onore di Giuseppe Tucci* (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1974), 2: 254. Wafiyā Ezzy and Ralph Pinder-Wilson, "Rock Crystal and Jade," in *The Arts of Islam*, exh. cat., Hayward Gallery, (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1976), p. 129.

107. Bretschneider, *Mediaeval Researches*, 2: 263.

108. Mirkhwand, *Rawzat al-Safa*, 6: 705–6.

109. Fateme Keshavara, "The Horoscope of Iskandar Sultan," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, no. 2 (1984): 197–208; L. P. Elwell-Sutton, "A Royal Timurid Nativity Book," in *Angos Islamikos: Studia Islamica in Honorem Georgii Michaelis Wickens*, ed. R. M. Savory and D. A. Agius, *Papers in Medieval Studies*, no. 6, (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1984), pp. 119–36.

110. For a similar example in the Topkapı Sarayı Library (H.2153, f. 164a), see Ernst Kühnel, *Miniaturmalerei im Islamischen Orient* (Berlin: Cassirer, 1923), pl. 41.

111. Aubin, "Le Mécénat Timouride," pp. 81–84; Zeren Akalay, "An Illustrated

Astrological Work of the Period of Iskandar Sultan," *Akten des VIII Internationalen Kongresses für Iranisches Kunst und Archäologie München* 7–10. September 1974 (Berlin, 1979), pp. 418–25.

112. Topkapı Sarayı Library, B.411, ff. 138b–166a, with a date of A.H. 21 Rabi' 816 (A.D. 21 June 1413). Also found in this section are a description of the beneficent and detrimental properties of foodstuffs, a historical listing of the rulers of the earth, geographical works, descriptions of games, calendrical systems, commentaries on omens and auguries, a brief history of Timur's family emphasizing Iskandar-Sultan, and a collection of Aristotelian aphorisms. Not yet comprehensively studied, this massive album, which consists primarily of calligraphic specimens, bears the name and titles of Iskandar's uncle Shahrukh on its binding flap.

113. E. S. Kennedy, "The Exact Sciences in Timurid Iran," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, 6: 578–80; Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 1: 263–67.

114. Barthold, *Ulugh-Beg*, p. 132.

115. Kennedy, "The Exact Sciences," p. 570.

116. E. S. Kennedy, "A Letter of Jamshid al-Kashi to His Father," *Orientalia* 29 (1960): 205.

117. Babur, *Baburnama*, trans. Beveridge, p. 79. Ulugh-Beg's tables were also translated into Latin for use in Europe as early as 1665. The authors thank Wheeler Thackston for this information.

118. For earlier copies of the manuscript, see Richard Ertinghausen, *Arab Printing* (Geneva: Skira, 1962), pp. 50–52.

119. Barthold, *Ulugh-Beg*, pp. 157–60.



The Kitabkhana and the Dissemination of the Timurid Vision

FROM THE most humble servants of the regal library, whose eyes are as expectant of the dust from the hoofs of the regal steed as the ears of those who fast are for the cry of *Allahu akbar* [God is great]": such was the characteristically submissive salutation offered by the calligrapher Ja'far to his royal patron at the beginning of a report on the status of *kitabkhana* projects. He then quickly turned from florid rhetoric to matters at hand: "Khwaja Abdul-Rahim is busy making designs for the binders, illuminators, tentmakers, and tilemakers. . . . There was a design by Mir Dawlatyar for a saddle. Khwaja Mir Hasan copied it, and Mir Shamsuddin, Khwaja Mir Hasan's son, and Ustad Dawlatkhwaja are busy executing it in mother-of-pearl."

This small excerpt from the *arzadasht* (petition) (see Appendix 1) matter-of-factly details some of the central tenets of Timurid artistic theory and practice. Pasted inconspicuously among the extraordinary contents of album H.2153 in the Topkapı Sarayı Library, the document was transcribed at Herat in the late 1420s (fig. 51). In essence merely a list, the *arzadasht* nonetheless stands as a key source for any investigation into the Timurid *kitabkhana*.

Although the *arzadasht* is neither dated nor signed and does not specifically mention the prince to whom it is addressed, the artists and works that it cites identify it as a progress report from the *kitabkhana* of the Timurid prince Baysunghur.¹ Despite problems of interpretation of vocabulary, it represents one of the most complete and earliest documentations of *kitabkhana* practices, mentioning as many as twenty-two projects that were underway. Included are manuscripts, designs, objects, tents, even architectural works; twenty-three artists—painters, illuminators, calligraphers, binders, rulers, and chestmakers—are cited as either working individually or in teams, often on several projects at once. Viewed in conjunction with the large corpus of technical material—drawings, sketches, and pounces—that survives primarily in albums now located in Istanbul and Berlin, the workings of this institution

Cat. no. 95

"The Simurgh Restores the Child Zal to His Father Sam" (detail)
From a *Shahname* of Firdausi
Iran, c. 1444
f. 16b

[illegible]

۱. کجاست که نمی‌تواند
 ۲. کجاست که نمی‌تواند
 ۳. کجاست که نمی‌تواند
 ۴. کجاست که نمی‌تواند
 ۵. کجاست که نمی‌تواند
 ۶. کجاست که نمی‌تواند
 ۷. کجاست که نمی‌تواند
 ۸. کجاست که نمی‌تواند
 ۹. کجاست که نمی‌تواند
 ۱۰. کجاست که نمی‌تواند

[illegible]

The previous chapters suggest that works of art made for the princes after Timur's death reflect an ideological shift among the elite; while circumstances and motivations for this development were noted, little has been said of the actual content or the visual forms of Timurid art inspired by this new attitude. What remains to be seen are the ideals and mechanisms of the *kitabkhana* that brought this vision into being.

The cultures of Turco-Mongol Central Asia and China contributed to the new dynastic art of the Timurids, but it was the Islamic Iranian cultural tradition that dominated its formation. The conscious immersion of the Timurid elite into the Persianate cultural complex was a development of the highest importance. It was from this source that the dynasty drew much of the imagery that became synonymous with the royal house.

The roots of this cultural attraction can be traced to the dynasty's origins in Transoxiana on the fringes of the Iranian Islamic world. This influence was in turn enhanced by the Timurids' early confrontations with the sophisticated Persianate courts of western Iran and Iraq, specifically the Jalayirids and the Muzaffarids. The Timurids, eager for social and cultural legitimacy, quickly recognized the advantages of patronizing Persianate culture; already aware of its extent and influence, they usurped the royal traditions of patronage they encountered and in many cases virtually duplicated its forms.

A crucial additional factor for the dynasty's assimilation into the Persianate cultural tradition was the education of the princes. Most of the major patrons of the state during the early fifteenth century were probably tutored at Timur's court in Samarqand, presumably at the hands of a specially designated teacher (*atabeg*). In his history of the Timurid dynasty (c. 1470) Abdul-Razzaq Samarqandi wrote that a Timurid prince would learn at court all that a future ruler should know, a course of study that must have stressed the political and military aspects of Turco-Mongol statecraft.²

The princes were also undoubtedly exposed to a more humanistic Iranian Islamic education. The little known of the Islamic educational system in the Timurid period in Central Asia and Iran reveals a conservative curriculum, one almost unchanged since the

Arzudash
Hercules. 1427. 4H
ink on paper
46 x 11.5 cm (18 1/2 x 4 5/8 in)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Eserleri
H 285, E 402



cat. no. 17

Jug
Herat(?), dated A.H. 871 A.D. 1467

twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The teachings were ultimately religious: the "sciences," designated as "traditional" (the Arabic alphabet, Koran recitation and memorization, grammar, rhetoric) and "rational" (logic, philosophy, theology, astronomy, geometry, astrology), followed by *tafsir* (Koranic interpretation and commentary), *hadith* (prophetic tradition), prosody, and poetry.¹

The more imaginative and lyrical realms of thought

in the eastern Islamic world, however, lay squarely within the Persian literary tradition. Instruction in Persian culture had an important role in the early lives of the princes and its influence after Timur's death increased steadily. For cultured members of eastern Islamic society, Persian was the supreme literary language and the almost exclusive medium for poetry. By the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the language had become linked with an ornate, highly regulated style of



fig. 92

"Rostam Lifts Afraziyab from the Saddle"
 From a *Shahnama* of Firdawsi copied
 for Ibrahim Sultan ibn Shahrokh
 Shiraz, c. 1455
 Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
 on paper
 21.5 x 18.5 cm (8 1/2 x 6 5/8 in.)
 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Chancery
 Add. 176. f. 63b

expression in literature that delighted in virtuosity and reveled in complex sequences of metaphor and image.

Linked with these distinctive literary traits was Persian's influential social role. For Turkic patrons like the Timurids it was a court language, not a native tongue, an important distinction that encouraged a view of Persian as an acquired and contrived means of expression. Ruled by canons of courtly decorum, Persian was implemented for special purposes—court language, poetry, historical prose—among the Timurids and other Turkic dynasties.⁴ Fluency in the standard works of Persian literature and poetry was more than a mark of cultivation; it was recognized as a prerequisite for participation in court life.

Scores of richly decorated manuscripts as well as works penned by royal hands confirm the claims made by historians and biographers that patrons like Iskandar-Sultan, Ibrahim-Sultan, Baysunghur, and Ulugh-Beg embraced Persian letters. This literature with its vast matrix of epic, history, poetry, and scholarship inspired the ideals and conventions that increasingly informed the Timurid image. The dynasty's art consciously promoted a set of visual signals linked not to their Turco-Mongol past but representative of the new order; it symbolized their transformation from a military caste into monarchs in the Iranian Islamic mold who recognized the necessity of cultural prowess as an ideal of rule. Although the Persianate cultural and political bias of Timurid iconography was not new—the earliest known appearances of Timurid art are clearly responses to the Iranian Islamic tradition—the intensity and pervasiveness of its literary associations after Timur's death constituted a dramatic new emphasis.

The nobility surrounded themselves with beautiful objects that reinforced the sophisticated aura associated with the Persian language, like the metal jugs with verses of Persian poetry inlaid in silver and gold (cat. no. 57). Such decoration, common during the second half of the fifteenth century, replaced the figural imagery that dominated earlier Iranian metalwork.

Out of this newly emerged, literary-based Timurid vision came the constituent visual elements that fueled the dynasty's cultural aspirations and established the basis of its art. Through the kings, heroes, and lovers from traditional works like the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi or the *Khamsa* of Nizami, Timurid myths and fantasies

were repeatedly played out in an idealized setting. The perceived glory of Timurid destiny was presented in scenes that through repetition assumed their own distinct and visionary qualities. Royal painting provided Timurid patrons with the satisfaction of seeing their armies gliding victoriously over battlefields, their foes vanquished (fig. 52); members of the ruling house holding court and dispensing justice (cat. no. 140, ill. p. 283); feasting amidst courtiers in flowering gardens (cat. no. 32, f. 48b). This imaginary world was portrayed with a perfection of form and purity of color heretofore unseen in Islamic painting: its iconlike compositions were painted with ever-increasing precision and lyricism, as if to assure, like sympathetic magic, its certainty and existence. The dynasty's consistent pictorial re-creation of a princely world cast it in Timurid guise, as contemporary court fashion, architecture, and inscriptions in these pictures strengthened the linkage. Appropriated from Persian literature and refined, the courtly figures, brave warriors, and beautiful maidens in Timurid painting—a universe of images privy only to the elite—came to symbolize royal Timurid life.

The literary basis of this idealized experience portrayed in Timurid art influenced its form and expression. Unmarked by the spontaneity and personal expression associated with Western poetry, Persian poetry was conceived within a strict framework characterized by conventional patterns of thought, imagery, and metaphor.¹ Panegyric poets in service to the court offered stereotyped conceits of praise and standardized imagery of glorification such as the "just king," "royal lover," or "brave warrior." Reliance upon these archetypes by court artists led to conventionalized concepts in manuscript painting: like the poet, the painter in the Timurid kitabkhana presented this known, contrived royal mythos to his audience. By using a recognized royal iconography, one largely formed in Jalayirid painting, Timurid paintings imposed a perceptual structuring on the imagination of the viewer. The vision presented—static, conventional, and decidedly artificial—united style and content in the same restricted mode of perception. With illusionism and naturalism held at bay, the everyday world receded to allow both visual metaphor and formal structure to fashion anew the separate realm long associated with royal life in Iranian tradition.² This approach, taken to new extremes during the second



cat. no. 32

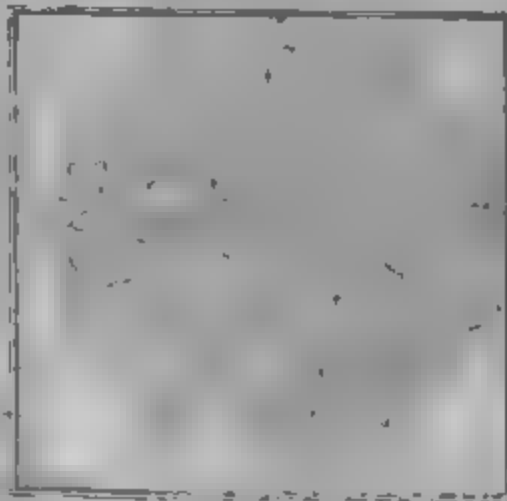
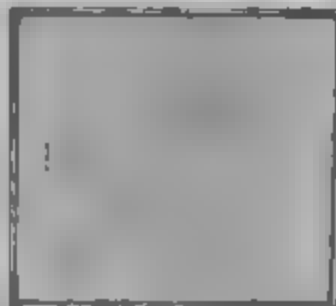
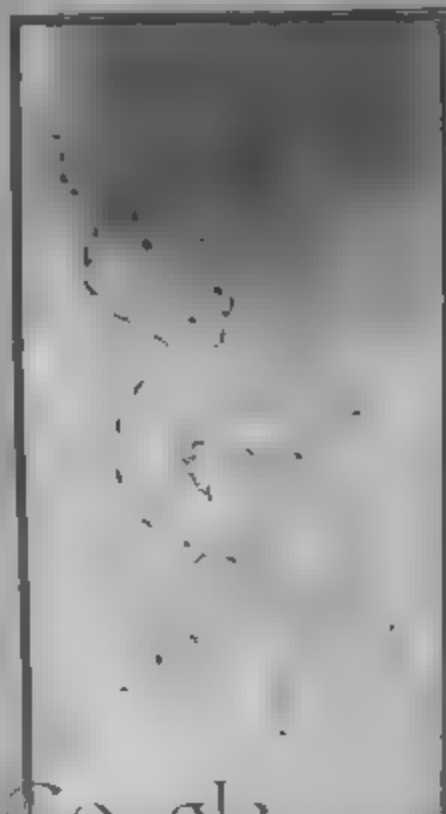
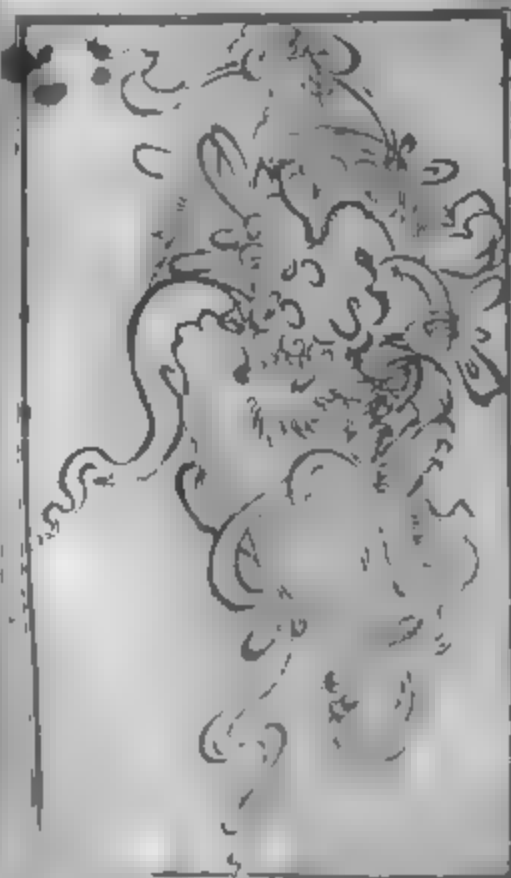
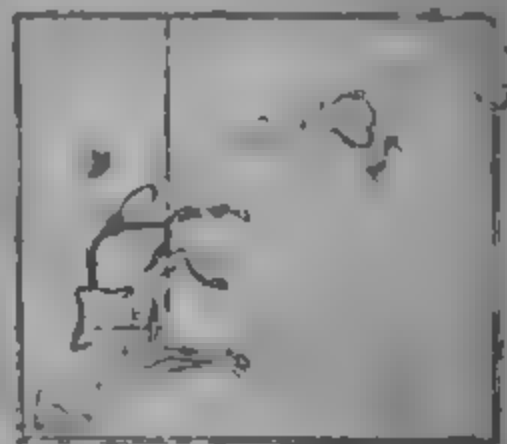
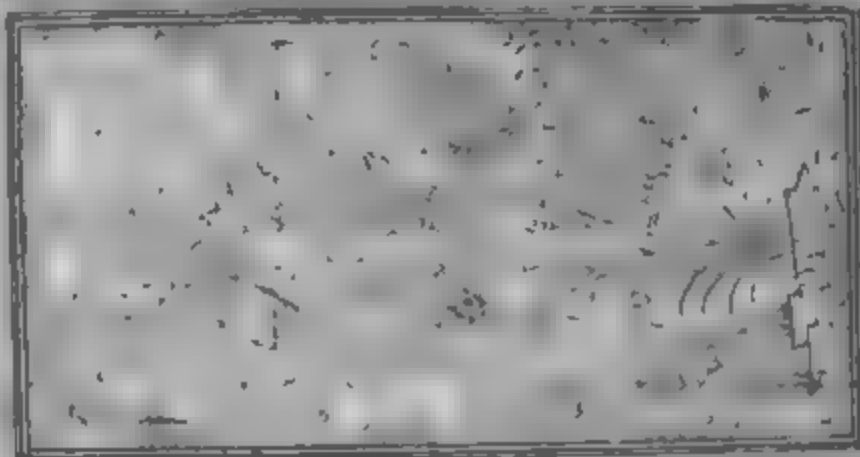
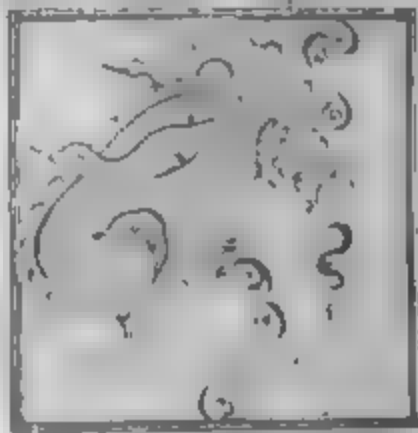
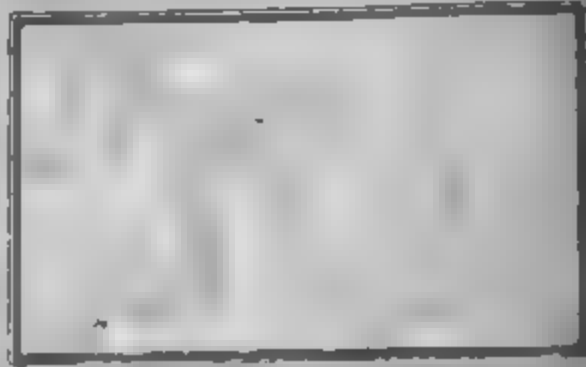
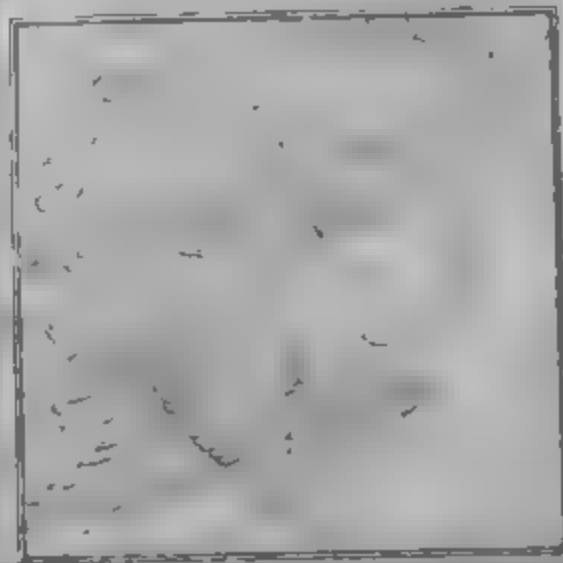
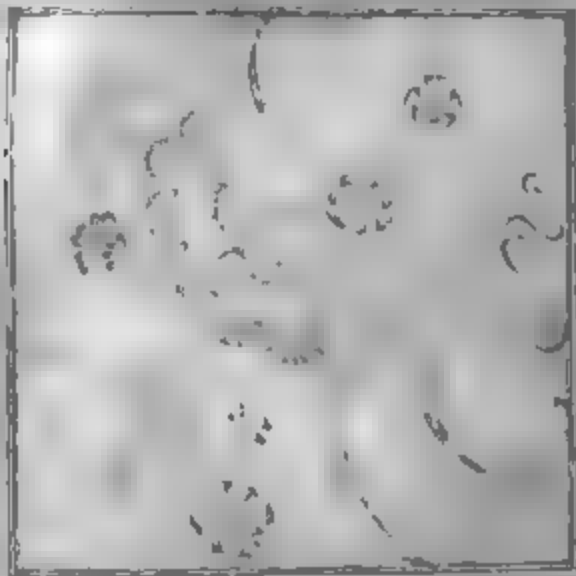
"Khusrau Feasting with Shirts in a Garden"

From a *Khamsa* of Nizami

Herat, dated A.H. 849 (A.D. 1445–46)
f. 48b

quarter of the fifteenth century, modified traditional royal symbols of authority, for poetry and lyricism under the Timurids assumed unprecedented prominence in the projection of a dynastic image.

The key to the creation of the Timurids' art lies in the methods and objectives of the kitabkhana staff, those artists and craftsmen responsible for visualizing princely aspirations. Their adherence to strict notions of artistic conception and transmission was repeatedly borne out by works in a variety of media. There are intriguing analogies among painting, decorative arts, poetry, and royal myth. These similarities demonstrate that Timurid art was envisioned as a closed system; the artists' imagination and creativity were governed by a circumscribed set of models that were products of interaction between royal workshops and the ruling house. The designs surviving from the kitabkhana also make it possible to begin to reconstruct formal categories: basic divisions of dominant visual features and values that characterize Timurid artistic production.



These categories allow speculation about both the structural and theoretical underpinnings of creativity under the dynasty's patronage. Although these divisions were not absolute in conception and practice, they clearly constituted loose groupings reflective of a dynastic visual program.

There were, of course, precedents to the Timurid kitabkhana and the categories it imposed. Links with earlier ateliers are confirmed by the "chains of transmission" between master and pupil recorded in Dost-Muhammad's brief history of painters and calligraphers written in 1544;⁷ the common lineage of training and instruction among Il-Khanid, Jalayirid, and Timurid artists implies that by Shahrukh's reign shared notions about painting and other arts of the book existed among those in the service of royal patrons, regardless of their place of origin or previous service. The confluence of highly trained artists from this heritage with the Timurids' aspirations and resources encouraged the creation of an ambitious, state-sponsored program of artistic production.

There is nothing, however, to suggest the existence of a single, centralized state organization or structure that housed Timurid artists. Timur's Samarqand, where hundreds of artists and craftsmen were gathered, could conceivably have been the site of a central manufactory, but evidence for it is lacking. The dispersal of artists in 1411 by Ulugh-Beg, the rise of princely courts in cultural competition with one another, and the peripatetic life of much of the aristocracy led instead to the establishment of different ateliers in the empire, each dependent on a prince's cultural ambitions and the talent he was able to lure there. Given that switching allegiances was common practice in both the political and cultural spheres of the Timurid world—an option repeatedly exercised by talents like the calligrapher Mawliana Ma'ruf Khattat—movement by artists among courts was frequent and expected.

Literary evidence, especially the *tadhkiras* (notices), often implies a close relationship between the artist, sometimes described as a "boon companion," and his Timurid patron.⁸ The artists' position also may have

been similar to that of civil servants—there is evidence that they represented princes on diplomatic missions—and their status often paralleled that of court poets. Historical sources rarely refer to poets as belonging to the court; instead they were attached to princes or members of the court by loose affiliation rather than official appointment and regular employment, though financial compensation was obviously involved. A poet was designated as a *mulazim* (attendant) or *musahib* (companion) of his patron,⁹ and artists may have attained similar status during this period. The term *musahib* is used by Dost-Muhammad to describe the favor bestowed upon Ala'uddawla's kitabkhana staff by Ulugh-Beg, who removed them to Samarqand after defeating his rival near Herat in 1448.¹⁰

The ad hoc nature of these relationships helps explain structural aspects of the kitabkhana. Often quoted is Dawlatshah's assertion that Baysunghur had forty calligraphers under the direction of Ja'far of Tabriz busy copying in his kitabkhana.¹¹ The *arzadasht* confirms the existence of a large number of artists and scribes working for the prince, presumably at his residence in the Bagh-i Safed on the northeastern flank of Herat. A brief entry even states that a specific structure, a kitabkhana, was built for the painters and that they were working there with the scribes. But it is not clear whether this was a formal institution where manuscripts were copied, decorated, and illustrated on a daily basis or a center where artists were periodically assembled for projects.¹²

While details of the relationship between the kitabkhana and its Timurid patron may be debated, the nature of the art born of that conjunction is vastly clarified by an abundance of technical material preserved in the Diez album (in the Staatsbibliothek, West Berlin) and albums in the Topkapı Sarayı Library, primarily album H.2152 (fig. 53).¹³ The albums contain drawings and sketches that are direct links in the process that carried an image or form from conception to execution and reveal that it was the codified nature of Timurid art that to a large extent defined visual creativity under the dynasty. At the heart of Timurid art and its dissemination was the notion of different categories of representation, a stratification of artistic thought and imagination that represented alternative, specific conceptions of how visual imagery was to be realized and perceived.¹⁴ It is primarily the vast body of Timurid

fig. 11

Page of preparatory drawings, sketches, and designs
Ink on paper
68 x 50 cm (26 3/4 x 19 3/4 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H.2152, f. 86a



cat. no. 46

"The Prophet Muhammad Conquers
Mecca"

From a *Kulliyat-i tarikh*

Herat, dated A.H. 818 (1415)

(A.D. 1415–16)

f. 171b



works in the albums that supports such a conclusion, for nowhere else is it possible to grasp the diversity of expression that Timurid patronage inspired in painting, drawing, illumination, and calligraphy. A staggering array of works that fall both inside and outside the confines of the art of the book are found. Yet one is continuously confronted with overwhelming evidence of a pervasive categorization that influenced form, content, and expression.

These categories were maintained by the Timurid penchant for standardization, repetition, and refinement. Three categories can be extracted from this material and tentatively identified on the basis of their function: illustrative, pictorial, and decorative. Each category broadly governs the realization of various idioms or themes by conventions peculiar to that category. These idioms, rather than the category that governs them, were responsive to fluctuations in individual Timurid taste and patronage. The rules of the idioms were fluid enough to allow individual responses by the kitabkhana staff. For example, within the illustrative category the rules of the poetic idiom changed in the latter part of the fifteenth century at Herat; in illustrated poetic manuscripts artists increasingly portrayed daily activities with greater naturalism, a departure from the coldly formal depictions of royal splendor favored earlier in the century. That these changes occurred at the idiomatic level suggests that once a category was established, it essentially operated as a kind of visual archetype for the dynasty.

In some cases, such as manuscript illustration, the formal elements of these categories were not Timurid inventions. The various idioms of the illustrative category—epic (cat. no. 58), poetic (cat. no. 59, f. 75a), historical (cat. no. 46, f. 171a)—were all created prior to the advent of Timurid art by Jalayirid, Muzaffarid, and Il-Khanid patronage; the conventions for scientific illustration (cat. no. 56) were set far earlier.¹¹ Timurid brilliance lay in the codification of these preexisting forms and ideas, a development that gave rise to a uniformity of artistic production characterized by an unprecedented refinement and lyricism. Rather than

cat. no. 58

"Rustam Encounters the Div King of
Mazanderan"

From a *Nashrnama* of Firdaws

Shiraz, c. 1415

f. 74b

cat. no. 59

"Encounter by a Stream"

From a *Poetic Anthology*

Yazd, dated A.H. 810 (A.D. 1407)

f. 75a





Lat. ms. 58

"The Constellation Centaurus
(Qinawrus) and Lupus (Sab)"
From a *Shams al-kawakib al-thalatha*
of al-Suh
Samarqandi²), c. 1450-40
f. 118a

create a wholly new art to represent the dynasty, the Timurids instead sought identification with an established visual tradition, one whose conventions and connotations would be recognized by the elites of the Iranian world, which the Timurids were struggling to control. A systematic organization of artistic production, carefully controlled and regulated by firmly established rules and concepts in the *kitabkhana*, was one way of assuring a consistent, uniform image.

Despite the apparent paucity of Timurid documents on art, substantial information about this visual hierarchy is provided by the *arzadasht*. It outlines the role *kitabkhana* drawings played in providing designs for a variety of media as well as the importance of codifica-

tion and repetition in that process. The document does not, however, yield an explicit theoretical framework or a clear and consistent vocabulary for Timurid artistic production; there may not have been a need to verbalize this process of categories and idioms since the *kitabkhana* was actually practicing them on a large scale.

Artists working under later dynasties, however, did find it necessary to commit their aesthetic theories to writing. From the succeeding Safavid dynasty a number of artistic treatises and commentaries survive that provide both a conceptual foundation and a terminology with striking similarities to the visual divisions found in Timurid art. The Chaghatayid prince

Muhammad-Haydar Dughlat, writing during the first half of the sixteenth century, was an avid admirer of Timurid culture and achievements, and the vocabulary he used in his description of painters working in late fifteenth-century Herat is notable for its inference of commonly accepted standards among the cultural cognoscenti. The qualities he admired in painting, particularly the importance of design, repetition, and refinement, are the very ones that echo from earlier fifteenth-century Timurid art:

Bihzad: He is a master of depiction (*musawwir*). Although his hand is not so fine (*nazuk*) as Shah-Muzaffar's, his brush is more solid (*muhkam*) than the former's, but the former's draftsmanship (*tarh*) and articulation (*ustakhwan-bandī*) are better than his. . . . Ustad Baba Hajji: in painting, his brush is masterly, but his underdrawing is flimsy (*beandam*). In all of Khurasan he is without equal in painting design (*tarrahi-i naqsh*) and charcoal (*zughal-giriftan*). It is said that in a gathering he was goaded to draw fifty semicircles, all [as though drawn by] a compass, without the slightest differentiation. Not one was larger or smaller by so much as a hair's breadth.¹⁶

Writing about aesthetic categories at the end of the sixteenth century are two figures more familiar with the details of artistic production: the Safavid painter and *kitabdar* (librarian) Sadiqi Beg and Qazi Ahmad, whose family's service to the Safavid patron and bibliophile Ibrahim Mirza presumably gave him knowledge of the workings of a royal atelier. Sadiqi Beg's *Qanun al-suwar* (Canons of painting)¹⁷ represents a rare elucidation of the actual techniques of painting and drawing and provides insights into the aesthetic philosophy that dominated the Safavid *kitabkhana*.

Most relevant to Timurid artistic production is Sadiqi Beg's breakdown of *kitabkhana* activities into divisions that resemble categories and idioms. Decorative art (*naqqashi*), figural painting (*suratgari*), and animal design (*janvarsazi*) are each singled out for discussion with a listing of types and genres to be emulated. The elements of decorative art, for example, were passed on to him by his master, the sixteenth-century royal Safavid artist Muzaffar-Ali, who trained under the Timurid painter Bihzad. Sadiqi subdivides *naqqashi* into seven idioms capable of undergoing a



Lot. no. 10

"The Constellation (Letus) (Jirus)"
From a *Sawar al-kawakib al-thabita* of
al-Sufi
Samarqand(?), c. 1410–40
f. 18v

variety of modifications and interpretations: *islami* (the ivy and spiral pattern), *khata'i* (the Chinese floral pattern), *abr* (cloudlike or marbled "veins of foliage"), *waq* (the human-head-bearing tree), *nilufar* (the lotus), *farangi* (the Frankish or European pattern), and *band-i rumi* (the Anatolian knot pattern). These divisions are also mentioned in slightly different terms by Qazi Ahmad in his *Gulistan-i hunar* (Rose garden of art),¹⁸ a treatise on calligraphers and painters. This shared recognition of representational categories that encompass internal idioms appears to be a continuation of artistic concepts established under Timurid sponsorship. Nowhere is the implementation of these categories and idioms in Timurid art more readily apparent than in the works themselves.



cat. no. 5B

"Iskandar and the Sirens"
 from a *Shamsa* of Nizami
 Herat, dated A.H. Rabi' 11835
 A.D. December 1431
 f. 484a

ILLUSTRATIVE

As its name implies, the illustrative category governed the illustration of manuscripts and was specifically concerned with the visualization of narrative elements of the story. In Timurid manuscript painting (cat. no. 38, f. 484a) a distinctive, uniform typology of figures and settings is steadily maintained, deftly balanced and emphasized by luminous colors and precise draftsmanship; these elements contribute to the illustrations' clear disavowal of the physical world, an effect characteristic of this category. Distinguished by the precision of its design, the artificial ordering of this space actively suppresses naturalism and three-dimensional perspective to produce an idealized, abstracted painting characterized by emotional and physical detachment. This artificial construct in the past has been characterized as charming but primitive because of its apparent lack of interest in physical reality. For the Timurids, however, its absence was intentional. While there are instances of three-dimensional perspective and illusionism in their painting, these options were mostly rejected in illustrative works. By means of inherited conventions and devices they instead embraced a conceptual vision that best conveyed the ideals of the dynasty. Based on a series of repetitions and simplifications, the courtly world portrayed in this category is a distillation of the Timurid aesthetic.

Timurid manuscript illustration joined aesthetic inclinations and ideological programs to an extent that rarely occurred in other artistic forms apart from architecture. Its characteristic forms and compositions, like court poetry during the period, were learned and restricted, and their wide dissemination is partly explained by the dynasty's standardization of all pictorial elements. The Timurid drawings now in the Berlin and Istanbul albums demonstrate the dominance of a typology for Timurid artists dictated both by the texts to be illustrated and contemporary court life.

The albums are populated by figures from these sources—princes (fig. 54), princesses (fig. 55), warriors (figs. 56–57), courtiers and attendants (fig. 58), and animals (fig. 59)—that are consistently found in the same poses and using similar gestures. Nearly all are isolated on blank backgrounds, and a broad qualitative range is found: carefully worked and finished drawings are placed side by side with rapid sketches or exercises set down at different angles onto blank sheets or other



fig. 54

"A Seated Prince"

Herat(?), c. 1430

Ink on paper

6.2 x 9 cm (2 1/2 x 3 1/2 in.)

Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,

H.2152, f. 90b

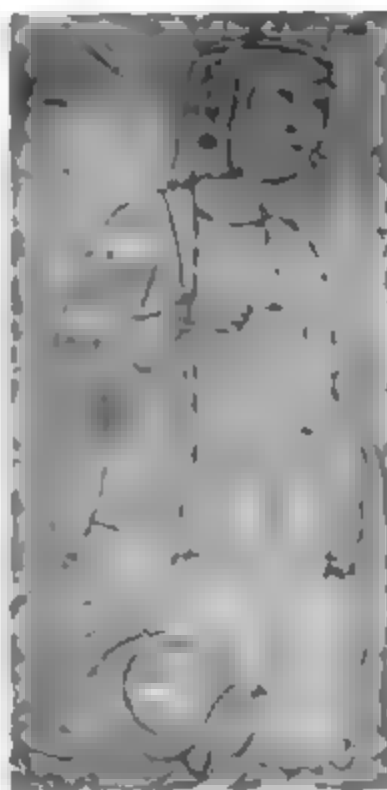


fig. 55

"A Seated Princess"

Herat(?), c. 1430

Ink on paper

12.4 x 14.2 cm (4 7/8 x 5 5/8 in.)

Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,

H.2152, f. 49b

fig. 56

"Mounted Warrior"

Herat(?), c. 1430

Ink on paper

9.8 x 7.8 cm (3 7/8 x 3 1/8 in.)

Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,

H.2152, f. 87b



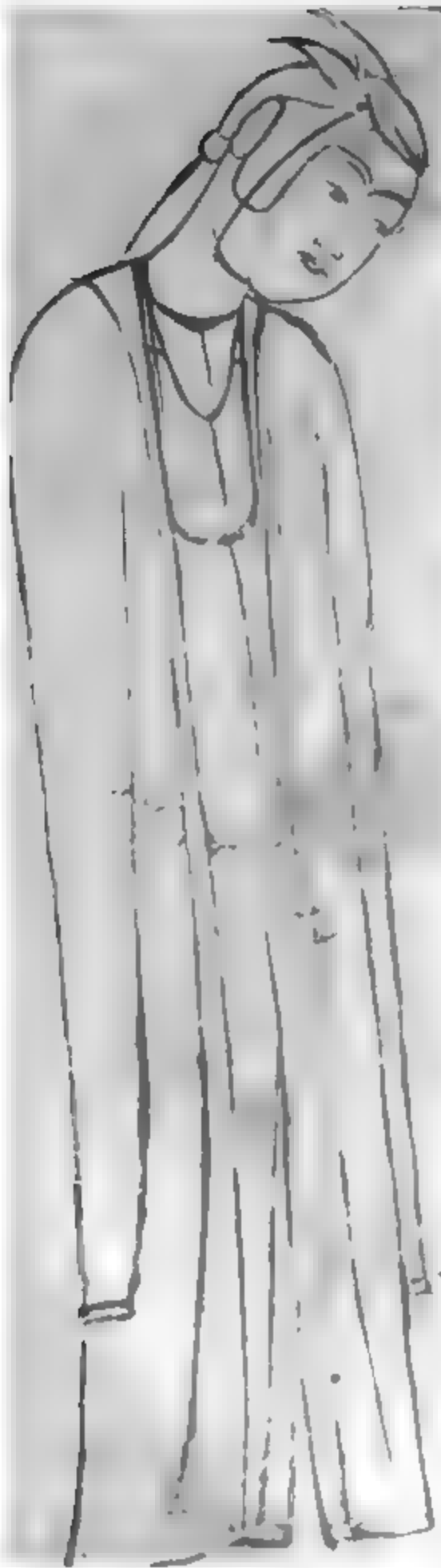


fig. 60

"A Lady of the Court"
Iran, c. 1425-50
Ink on paper
41.6 x 12 cm (16 1/2 x 4 3/4 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H.2152, f. 49b
Inscriptions appear to be color
instructions.

fig. 57

"Mounted Warriors"
Herat?, c. 1430
Ink on paper
12.2 x 13.3 cm (4 3/4 x 5 1/4 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek
Preussischer Kulturbesitz,
Orientabteilung, Diez album
E.71.5.76, #1

drawings. Size also varies, with some sheets bearing single images as small as two by four centimeters, which would correspond to actual manuscript illustration dimensions. Others show unusually large figures, one more than forty centimeters tall and "pounced," that is, its outlines pricked with a stylus for transfer to another surface (fig. 60).¹⁹ Nearly all of the drawings appear to have been executed with a brush, the range of hands varying from precise, economical renderings (cat. no. 60) to those featuring a more fluid, expressive line (cat. no. 61). The majority are executed in black ink, though other examples, including the large drawings, were drawn in a crimson ink evidently reserved for the preliminary stages of a drawing.

When the material in the H.2152 and Diez albums is viewed as a whole, the importance of a vocabulary of types, a series of stereotyped images that are constantly

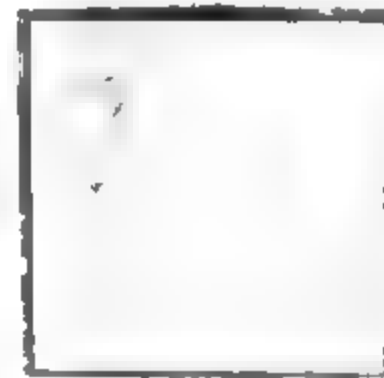


fig. 58

"Attendant"
Iran, c. 1425-50
Ink on paper
5.5 x 5.5 cm (2 1/4 x 2 1/4 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H.2152, f. 47b



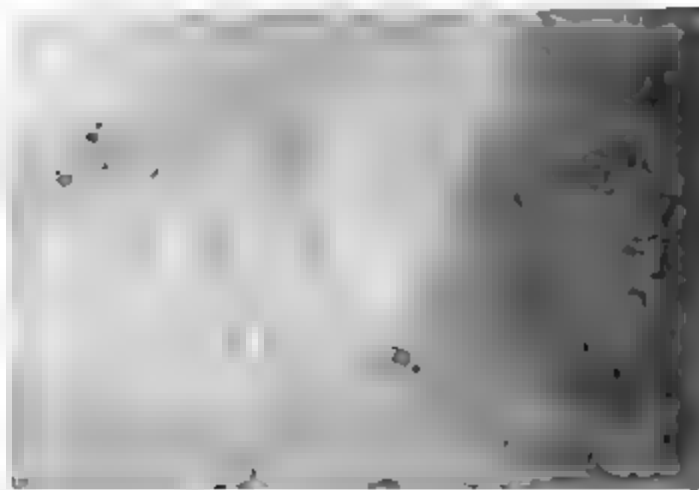
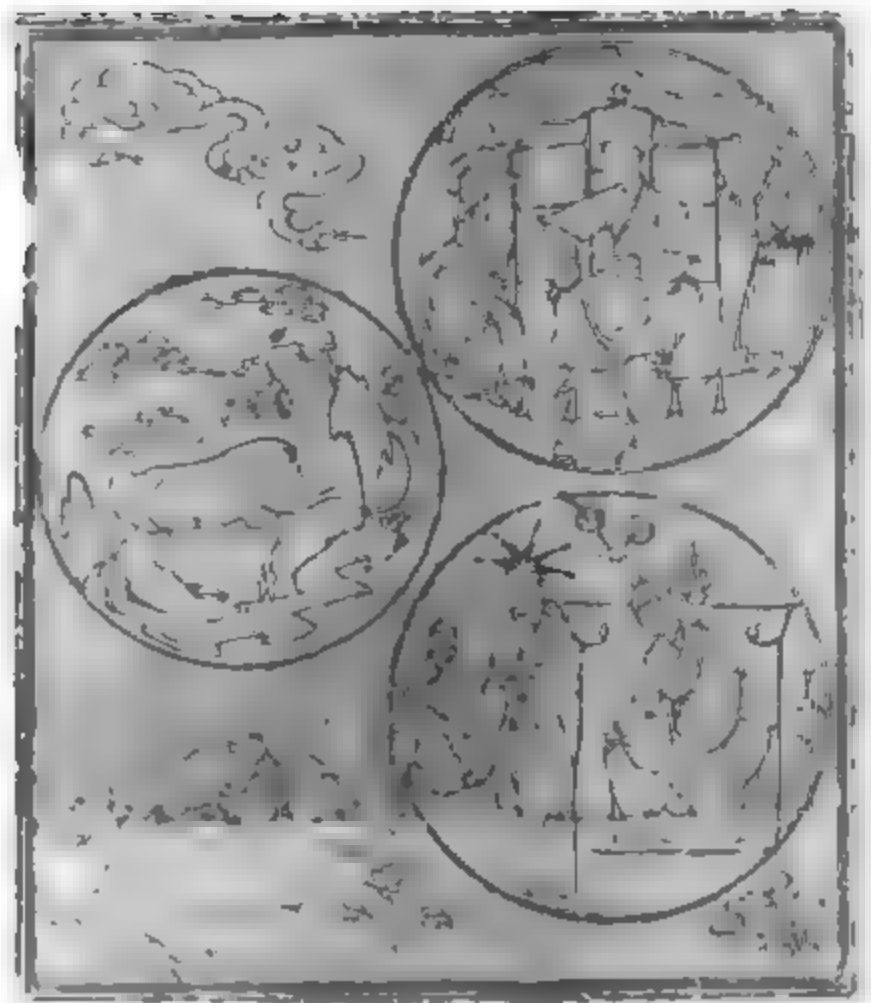


fig. 59

"Animal Lumbat"
Herat?, c. 1415–50
Ink on paper
24.3 x 23.3 cm (9 5/8 x 9 1/8 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H. 2152, f. 61b

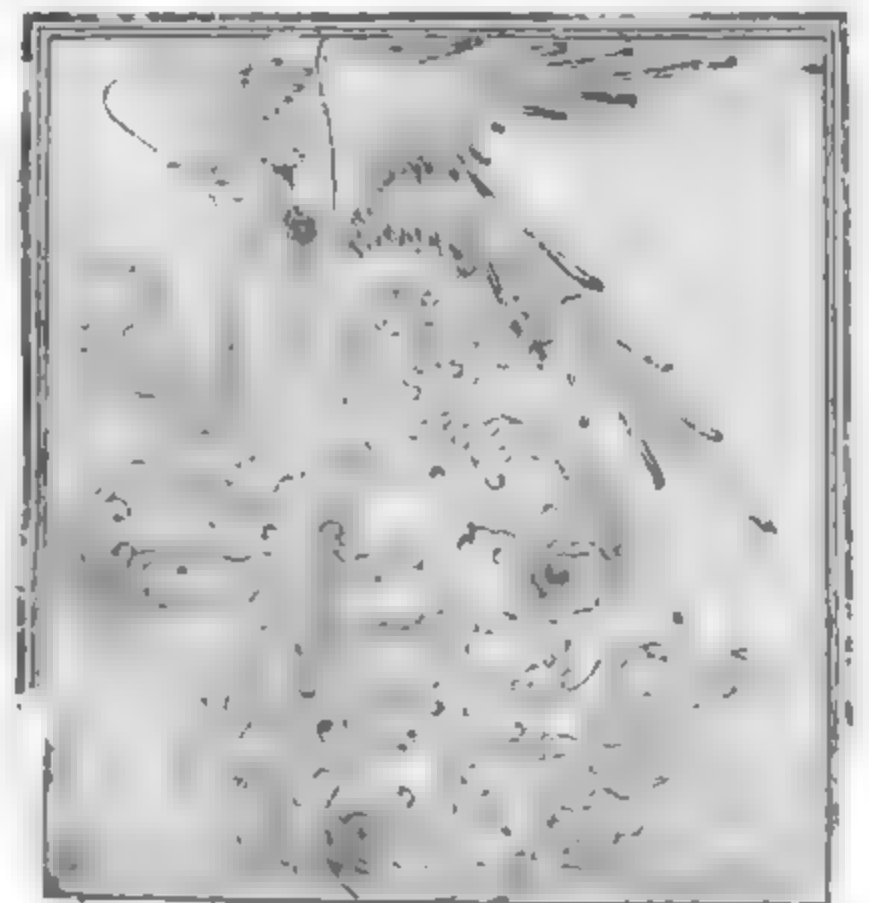
repeated as individual units, is confirmed. The experimentation and invention characteristic of the more flamboyant images in other Istanbul albums such as H. 2153, H. 2154, and H. 2160 is curiously absent, replaced by standardized subjects and muted expression. There is repeated evidence of duplication, either through the use of pouncing (fig. 61), or, more rarely, thin transparent animal skins used for tracing.⁴⁰ These methods technically facilitated the transfer of images, but members of the kitabkhana also perpetuated and perfected these images through models and repetition. Distillation of an image by means of duplication and refinement gradually removed the spontaneity and freedom of the preliminary impression, leaving in its place the frozen, idealized image sought by the Timurid house in this category (cat. no. 62, fig. 62).

The integral role of these standardized drawings is confirmed by their widespread use as components of compositions in royal manuscript painting. For example, one can see many individual elements from the Diez and H. 2152 albums in works commissioned by Baysunghur: the *Gulistan* (1431), an *Anthology* (1426–27), the *Shahnama* (1430), and the *Kalila u Dimna* (1431).⁴¹ Not only are individual figures and motifs used but fragments of larger scenes as well; the Diez album drawing of a group of metalsmiths is duplicated from "Jamshid Teaching the Crafts" in Baysunghur's *Shahnama* (cat. no. 63).⁴² Once perfected, these components were able to satisfy a variety of



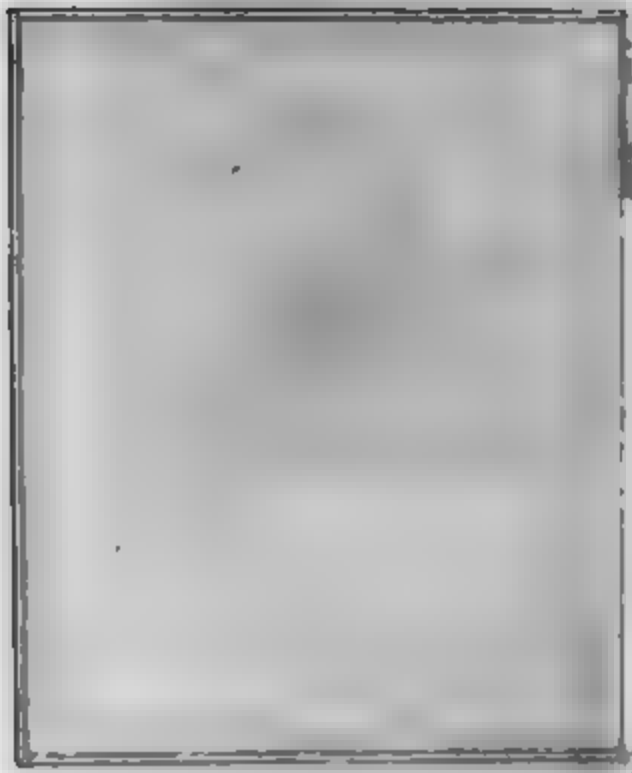
cat. no. 60

Rumuleh
Shiraz, c. 1410–20



cat. no. 61

"Angel in a Cloud"
Herat?, c. 1415–50



cat. no. 61

"The Craftsman of Jamshid"
Herat, c. 1450

compositional requirements. The drawing of a prince seated alone on a carpet in a garden in H.2152 (fig. 63) is transformed into a maiden joined by the figure of Baysunghur in the *Anthology* (fig. 40) and modified yet again in an unfinished illustration in the Diez album meant to reproduce "Shirin Spies the Portrait of Khusraw" from the *Khamsa* of Nizami (cat. no. 64).

These drawings represent the structural units of manuscript illustration, idealized types that were the components used to form compositions. They reflect again the Timurids' emphasis on duplication and repetition, which even extended to entire compositions (see Appendix III). This phenomenon occurs frequently enough to suggest levels of meaning in the dynasty's royal books that transcend purely narrative concerns.

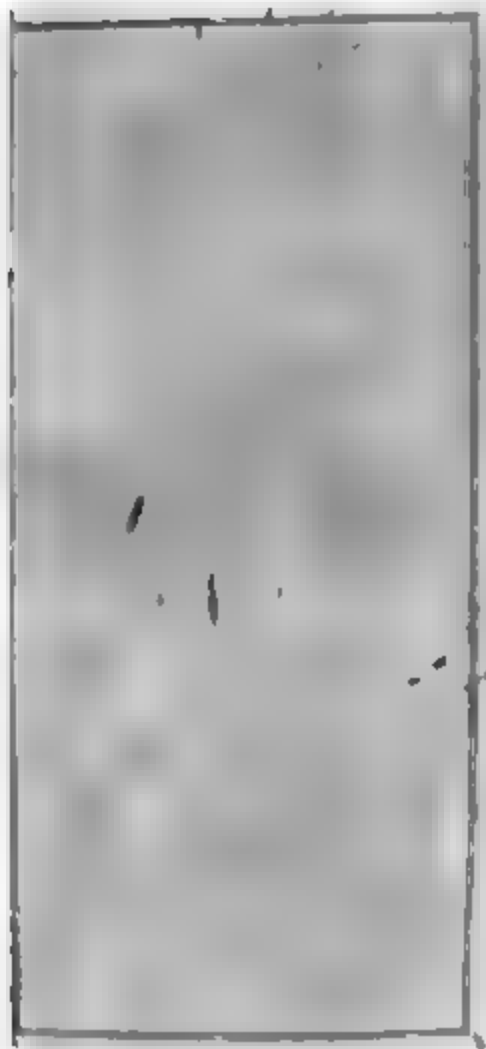


fig. 63

"A Prince Seated in a Garden"
Herat, c. 1426-27
Ink on paper
25 x 20.5 cm (9 7/8 x 8 1/8 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H.2152, f. 49a

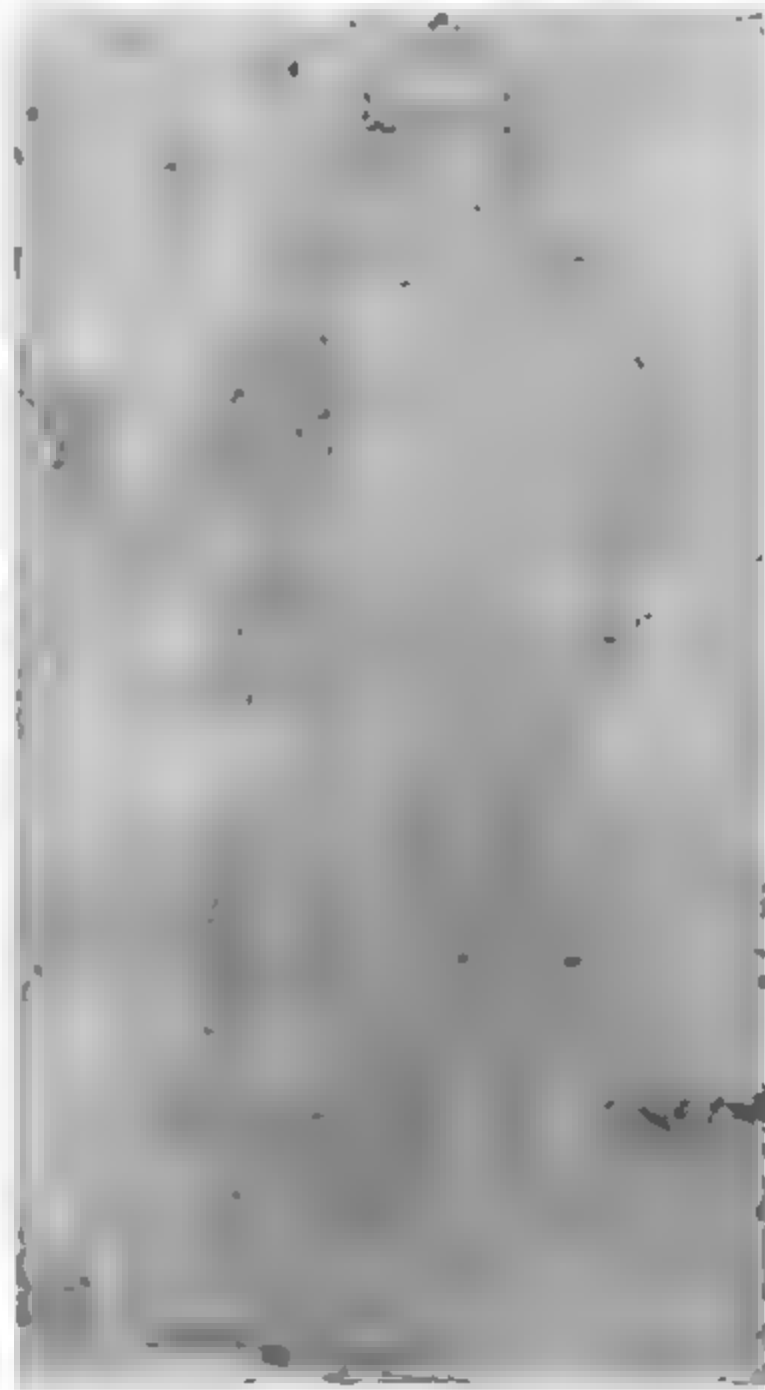


fig. 61

Figure of a warrior taken from
"The Murder of Siyavush"
From a *Shahname* of Firdawsi copied
for Baysunghur ibn Shahrugh
Herat, dated A.H. Jumada 833
(A.D. January 1430)
Ink on paper
11.7 x 5.1 cm (4 5/8 x 2 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H.2152, f. 62b



CAT. No. 62

"Bahrām Gur Hunting"
From a Haft paykar of Nizami
Herat(?), c. 1425-50



fig. 62

"Mounted Horsemen"
Herat(?), c. 1425-50
Ink on paper
5.8 x 5.8 cm (2 1/4 x 2 1/4 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatliche Bibliothek
Preussischer Kulturbesitz,
Orientalische Abteilung, Diez album
I. 75.59, #4

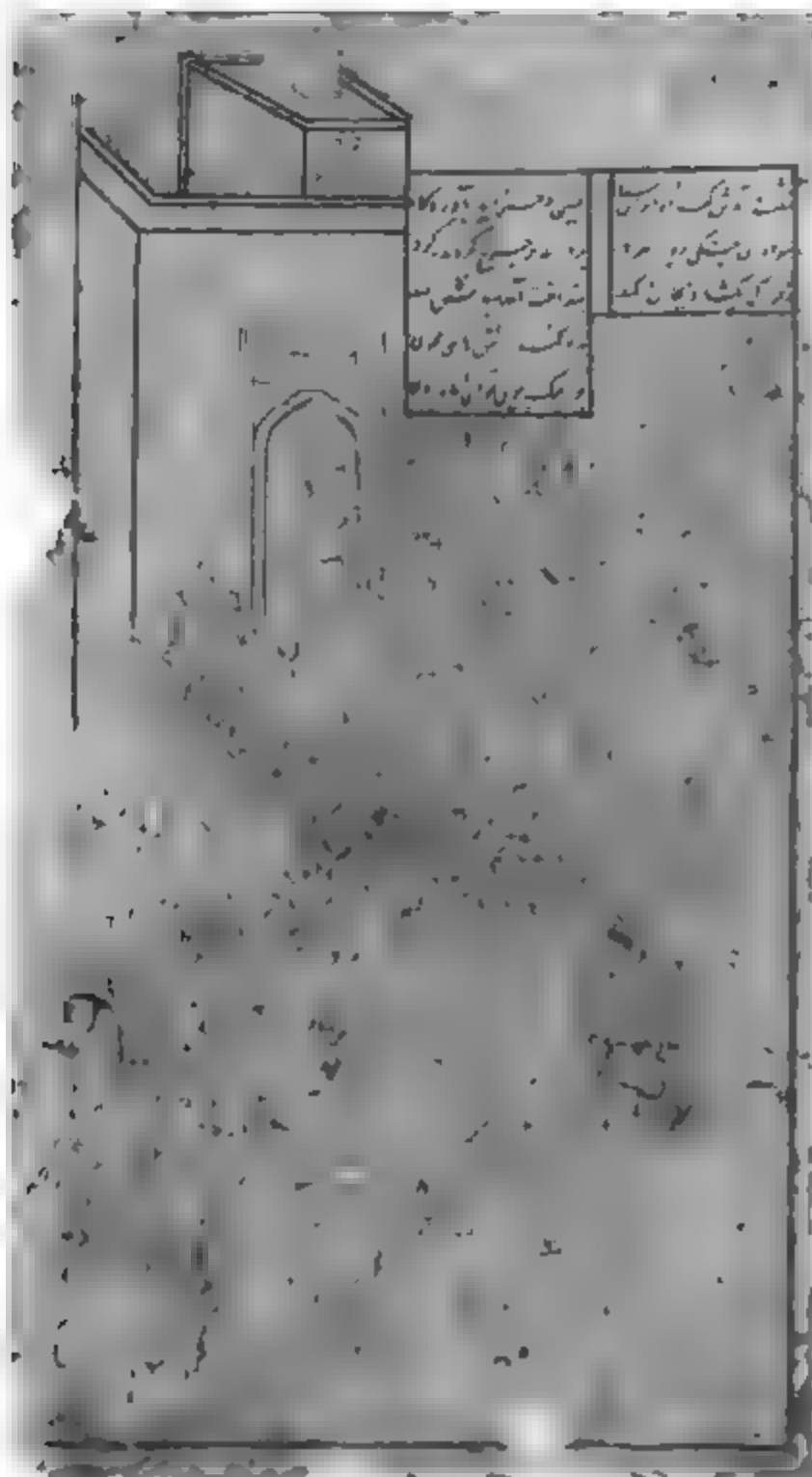


cat. no. 64

"Shirin Spies the Portrait of Khusrav"
Herat, c. 1425–30

Preserved along with final drawings for entire compositions (cat. no. 65) are unpainted models heavily pounced for transfer (cat. no. 66) that were instrumental in the extraordinary mimicking of compositions in books for the royal house. Regardless of the text being illustrated, at least eight compositions, four of them with their origins in Jalayirid manuscripts, can be traced through royal Timurid books and in some cases, Aqqoyunlu examples that follow.

How is one to characterize this painting of so few apparent innovations, one virtually devoid of the bold formal leaps that characterized much of pre-Timurid painting? Its uniformity, balance, compositional coherence, and impeccably precise technique were not so much derived from individual artistic inclinations as from a larger conception of painting that involved integrating a restricted set of stereotyped images into a composition. This aesthetic process froze both image



cat. no. 65

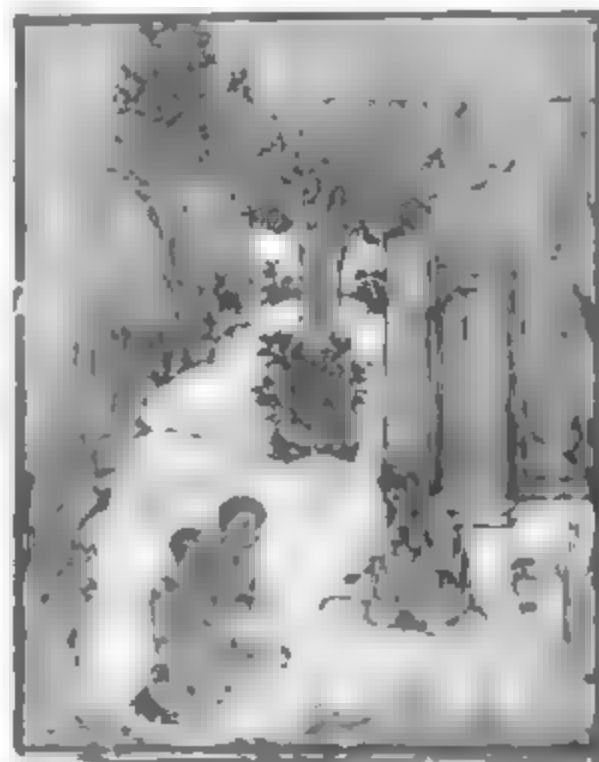
"Sohrab's Battle with the Female
Warrior Gurdatarid"
Iran, c. 1425-50

celebrated and confirmed Timurid rule, pulling its elite audience into a private world emblematic of the ideals of the dynasty.

The execution of manuscript illustration did vary depending on the idiom, which influenced the shape, size, expression, and number of illustrations as well as their relationship to the text. It is significant that different texts required different conventions, which collectively constituted an idiom. Manuscripts in the historical idiom, like the *Majma' al-tawarikh* done for Shahrukh (cat. no. 27), are normally distinguished by large formats, single blocks of text written in prose, high rates of illustration, horizontal picture dimensions, and a less refined painting that adheres closely to the narrative.⁴³ Those in the scientific idiom, such as al-Sufi's *Suwar al-kawakib al-thabita* (Book of the fixed stars) commissioned by Ulugh Beg (cat. no. 56), also share high rates of illustration, often with several images to the page, but are distinguished by schematic renderings of the subject.

and style; rather than exercising a free hand, the Timurid artist illustrating a manuscript operated under constraints of subject, expression, scale, narrative requirement, and vocabulary. His creative role was determined by his ability to manipulate effectively the methods of illustration dictated by the manuscript.

The academic nature of manuscript painting, with its ideals of perfect execution and unified formal characteristics, indeed encouraged this different notion of artistic creativity. Neither a spontaneous nor romantic creation in the usual sense, Timurid manuscript painting during Shahrukh's reign modified and implemented precast images. Just as the court poet shunned an exploration of individual traits, dealing instead in types and stock characters, the kitabkhana also imaginatively plumbed a limited repertoire. The reliance upon archetypes and conventionalized concepts for illustration produced an internal royal vision that both



cat. no. 66

"Master and Pupils"
Iran, c. 1425-50



cat. no. 59

"Iskandar Builds the Wall to Dam the
Gog and Magog"
From a Poetic Anthology
Yazd, dated A.H. 830 (A.D. 1407)
f. 101b

cat. no. 41 (opposite)

The Simurgh Restores the Child Zal
to His Father Sam"
From a *Shahnama* of Firdawsi
Iran, c. 1444
f. 16b



cat. no. 67

"The Fire Ordeal of Siyavush"
Shiraz(?), c. 1400–1415

The poetic idiom, with its highly refined, precast pool of images and themes, perhaps best demonstrates the mechanisms of the illustrative category. The *Anthology* (1407) done at Yazd (cat. no. 59, f. 101b) is typical of this idiom with its small format, low rate of illustration, vertical picture dimensions, and subordination of text—multiple columns of rhyming verse, sometimes completely eliminated—to image. The wealth of extraneous detail, often courtly and luxurious in nature and not specified by the text, transformed paintings in this idiom from narrative images into elegant documentations of contemporary Timurid concerns.²⁴ Elements of both the historical and poetic idioms frequently converged in the epic idiom. In the *Shahnama* (c. 1440) for Muhammad-Juki the generally large format and high illustration rate typical of the historical idiom are combined with the refined typology seen in poetic painting (cat. no. 43, f. 16b). The heroic nature of the episodes to be illustrated calls for high drama, yet the poetic influences, with their lyricizing and theatrical tendencies, yield an effect more akin to fairy tale. For example, one episode from the *Shahnama*, found in the Diez album as an independent image without text, reflects such a confluence; "The Fire Ordeal of Siyavush" (cat. no. 67) is probably a full-scale study for a text illustration or an unfinished painting intended for inclusion in a manuscript. Ballooning proportions and the hypnotic, exuberant fiery mass reflect the subtle experimentation with format and proportion that occurred during the early Timurid period.

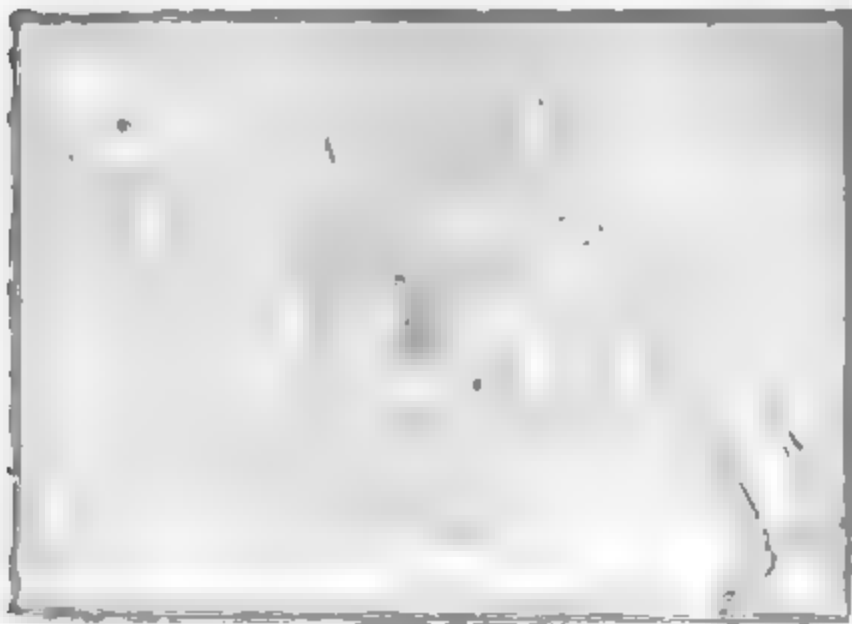
گر ای دین رخ نسیم دگام	پسنگ سپرخ با پر بام	درین پند که را تو کن دلبر	از بان بر شدن بند رهست پند
ترا ز داد آب روی آید	بین کون فرزند چری آید	نزد از ترک پس میان جان	پر بام مل جلوه جان
که سپاه استی ما ز جنت	سپرخ بشکر که دستان گنت	سینه آزار زد یک آوار است	روا باشد اکنون که بر دوار است
بسته تخت و کجای کلاه	بدکت سپرخ اگر تاج د	دو پر تو فستق کلاه نیست	نسیم ترخشن کاه نیست
چو خدای که پنی یک فرمن	ایزد پشتن بر کی پزمن	بکے از پشکن از دوزار	مگر کین نشت نیاید بکار
ابا چکانست بر آرد و دام	که بازیر پرت پر در و دام		
سپه از ارت آم طایگاه	مانک یایم چو ابری سیاه		
گر از ان با برادر ارادتش	اشکشت جبرام و بر دوشش		



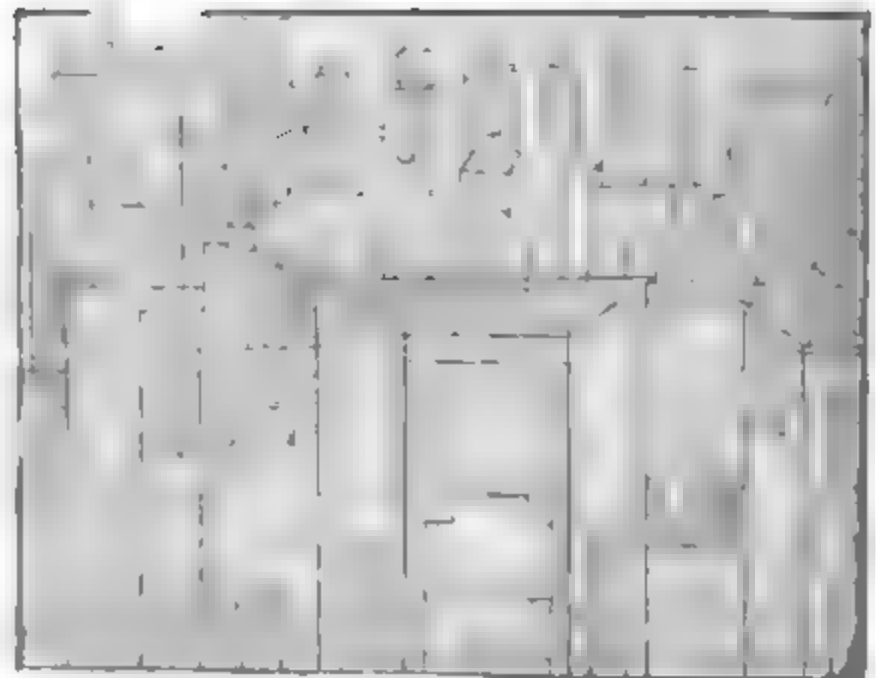
PICTORIAL

Ideas about Timurid painting have been based almost solely upon illustrated manuscripts, but the album material together with other evidence shows that a wide variety of painting flourished outside the context of the book. Whether executed as independent paintings and drawings or for inclusion in albums, the works that comprise the pictorial category are among the most inventive products of the Timurid imagination. Not tied to narrative content in the conventional sense (shown in conjunction with text), their focus is more generalized and evocative than the illustrative category with its specific requirements, though the close relationship between the two frequently blurs the distinction.

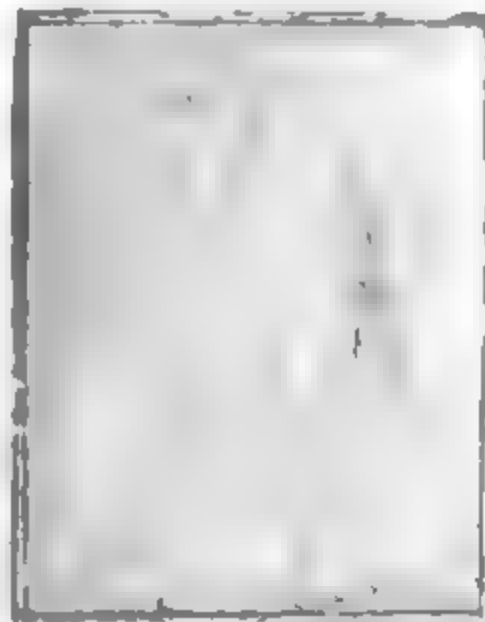
This category is distinguished by its greater emphasis on those elements conspicuously missing from manuscript illustration: increased expression, freedom of line, and virtuosity. Hints of illusionism appear alongside the expected decorum and restraint familiar from manuscript illustration. Significantly the subjects of these images were often drawn from the themes of Persian literature but were not bound by textual references; consequently, both form and content were more receptive to innovation and experimentation, and artists' hands and personalities are frequently more apparent.



cat. no. 68
"Fighting Camels"
Iran, c. 1400–1450



cat. no. 69
"Cityscape"
Iran, c. 1400–1450



cat. no. 71
"Female Figure"
Herat, c. 1425–30

To come upon vestiges of individual traits and personality out of the frozen facade of Timurid painting during the first half of the fifteenth century is startling. The albums offer plentiful evidence of natural observation and portraiture fashioned within the framework of conventional ideals (cat. nos. 68–69). Often works in the pictorial category took the form of more detailed elaborations of subjects extracted from manuscript illustration, such as a lady of the court with a floral spray (cat. no. 70), her taut lines evoking an appropriate formality and reserve, or a fur-capped notable resplendent in his Chinese-inspired finery (cat. no. 71); their poses and gestures instantly allude to the ideal



cat. no. 70 (right)

"Female Figure with Flowers"
Iran, c. 1425-50



cat. no. 74 (left)

"Male Head"
Herat(?), c. 1425-50



cat. no. 71 (above)

"Seated Male Figure"
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1425-50

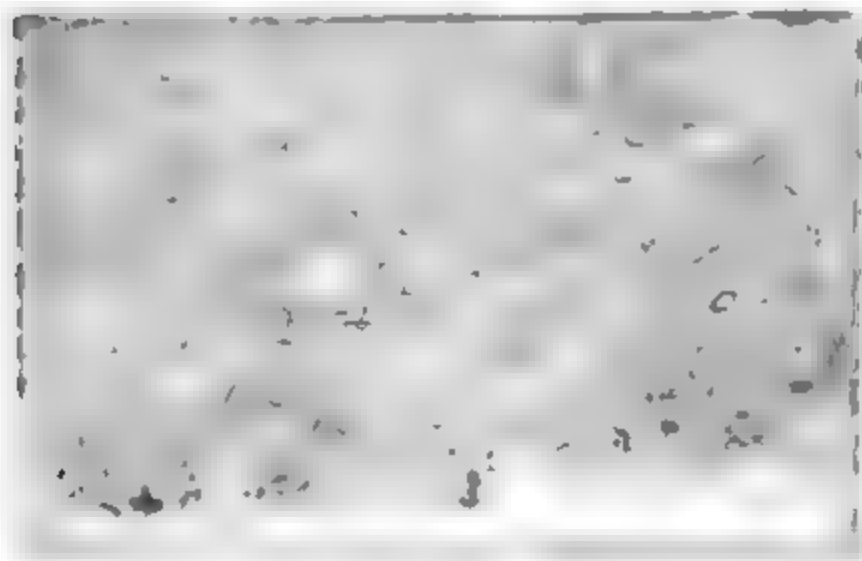
cat. no. 72 (left)

"Female Head"
Herat(?), c. 1425-50

types who inhabit poetry and book painting, but there are subtle differences.

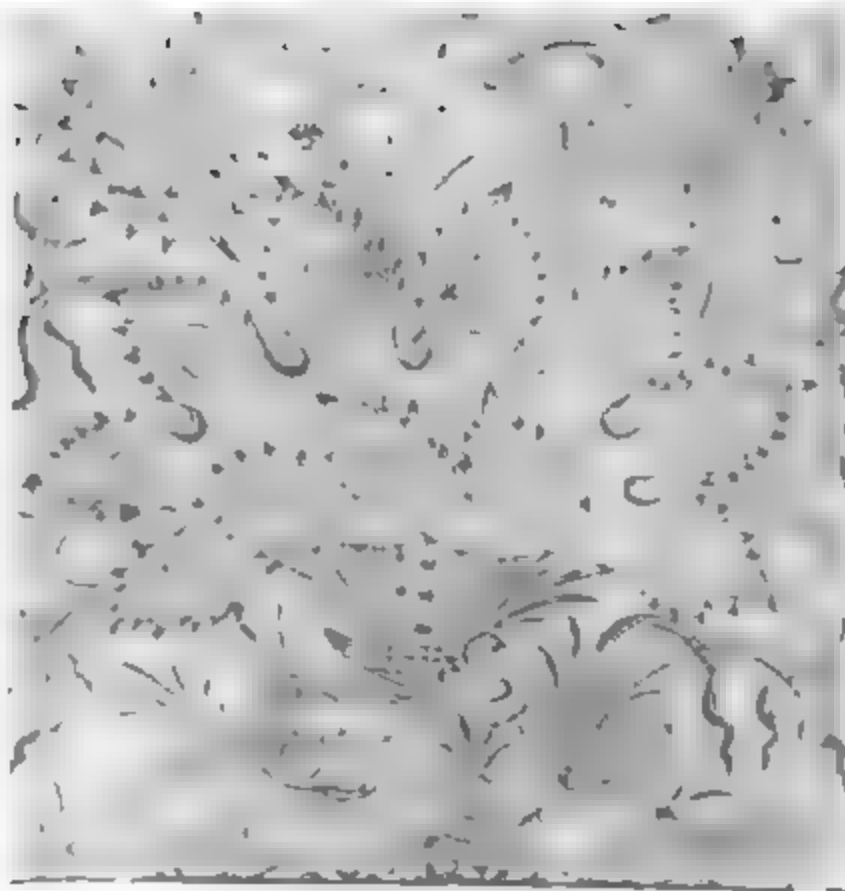
Timurid artists even set down with accuracy observations usually excluded from official art, as in the depiction of a rotund lady perhaps from one of the royal households (cat. no. 72). Two portraits by an unknown hand present a revealing glimpse of the haughty demeanor of the ruling elite (cat. nos. 73–74). Their cool visages constructed of smooth, wiry lines are betrayed by piercing eyes, and the male head in particular, its serpentine turban folds coiled around an impassive mask of a face, offers a chilling embodiment of the mixture of refinement and severity that marked Timurid rule. As seen in this portrait, there was a tacit agreement between artist and royal subject, a mutual recognition of the aggrandizing purposes of a royal image. This collaboration stood at the heart of the dynasty's success in projecting a facade of power and beauty.

One of the most remarkable features of the pictorial category under the Timurids was a tendency toward fantastic transformations of conventional subjects.



cat. no. 75
Fragment of a landscape
Iran, c. 1400–1450

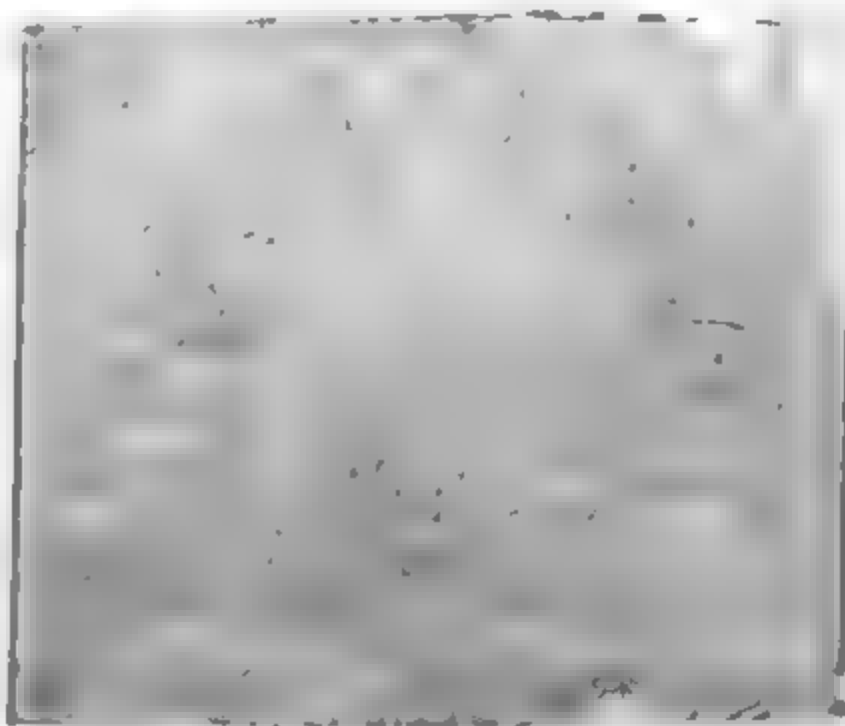
Landscape, for instance, was reanimated with exotic vegetation, animals, and rock formations inspired by East Asian sources, their surging lines and rhythms often combining to effect otherworldly, wind-swept vistas (cat. no. 75). Fanciful plants frequently served as independent compositions with astonishing results; often encountered are powerful, fan-shaped creations



cat. no. 76
"Fantastic Plant"
Iran, c. 1400–1450

whose shaded forms convey both weight and mass (cat. no. 76) or refulgent, symmetrical sprays that splash like fountains of light and shadow (cat. no. 77). The specific meaning of this vegetal exotica remains elusive, but its widespread presence throughout the albums shows the result of Timurid artists giving freer rein to their imaginations and emotions.

Other images dispense with this visual fanfare and instead dwell upon the quiet majesty inherent in the natural world. A recumbent stag in the Diez album, for example, looks heavenward, his open mouth and staring eyes transfixed by some unseen wonder, his flanks



ornamented by crescents, trails, and points that seem celestial in origin (cat. no. 78). Another sketch reveals a ghostly phoenix gliding across the page. This mythical bird, with its coils of plumage falling in turbulent, fluid strokes, is based on a Chinese source, yet its execution calls to mind the spontaneity and forcefulness of Leonardo's later studies (cat. no. 79).

Manuscript illustration's conventions and themes were constantly invoked in the pictorial category despite the absence of a textual reference. Paintings and drawings survive that appear to illustrate stories but lack text and defy identification, like the drawing of a pair of angels bearing objects (cat. no. 80) or the scene of a crowned angel peering out at the viewer as it hovers over flames, a bearded figure falling below (cat. no. 81).

The hunt, a royal theme with ancient, pre-Islamic meanings as well as literary associations, emerged as a favorite subject in this category. One drawing, showing



cat. no. 79 (above)

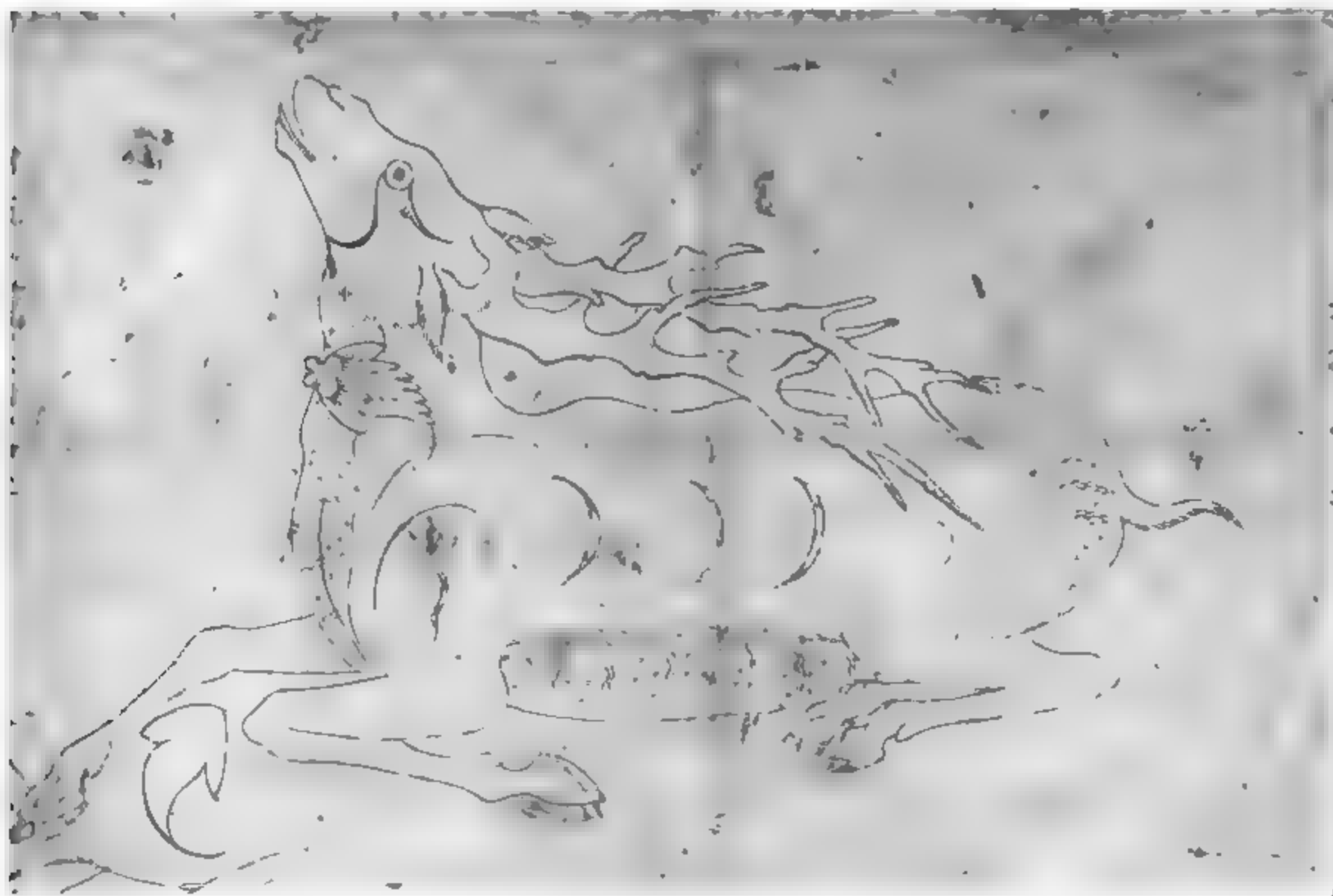
"Phoenix"

Iran, c. 1400-1450

cat. no. 78 (below)

"Stag"

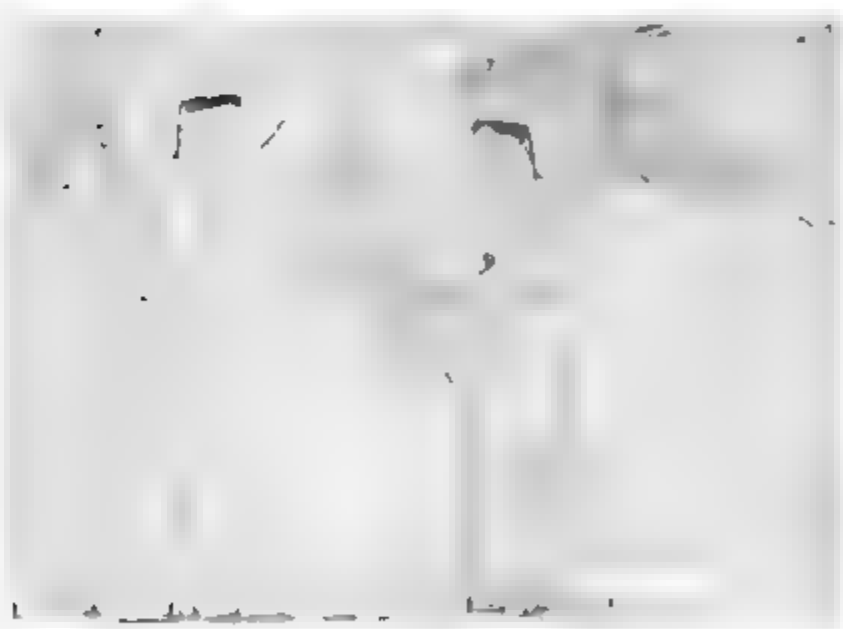
Iran, c. 1400-1450





cat. no. 82

"Mounted Warrior Fighting a Dragon"
Herat?, c. 1425-30

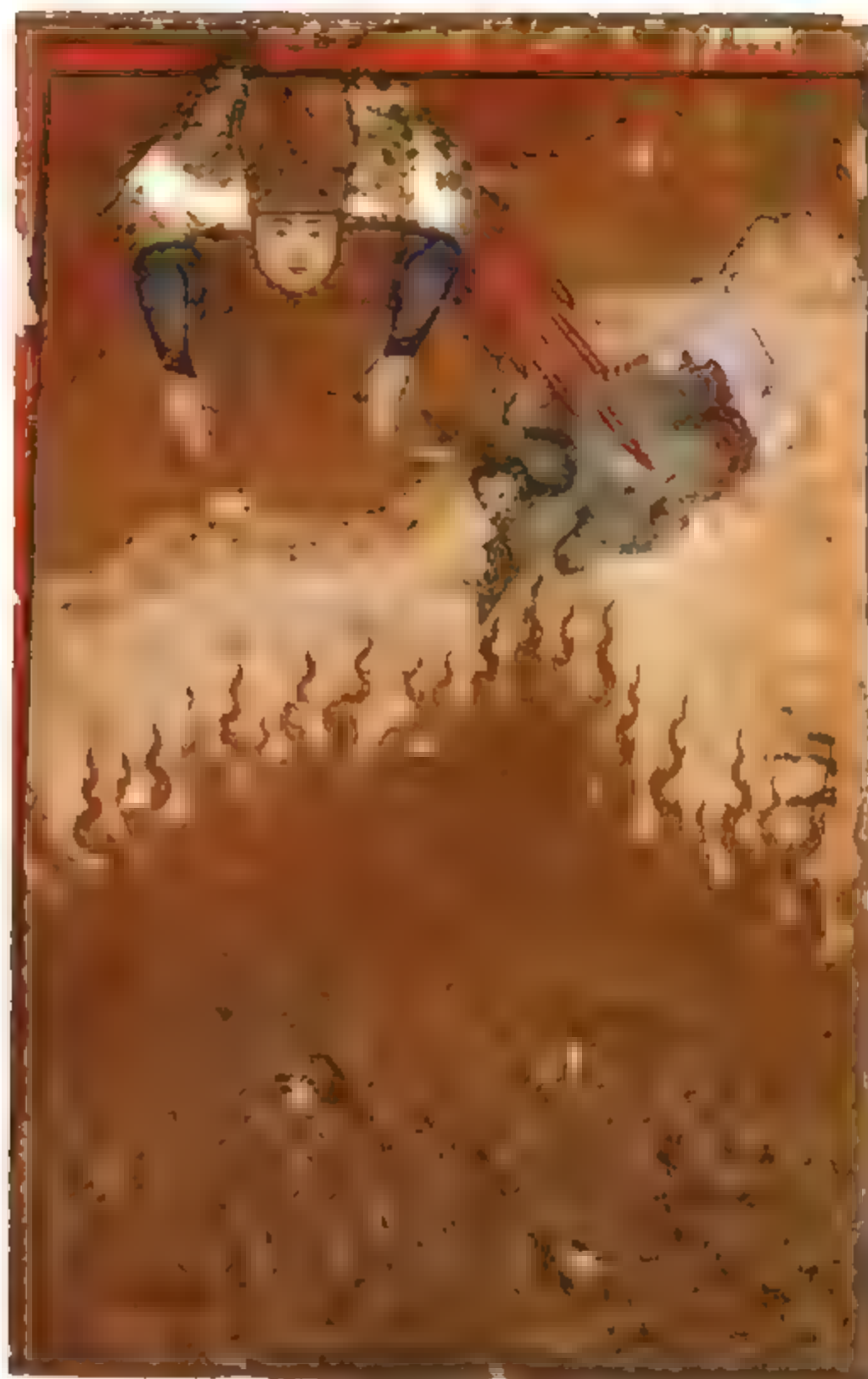


cat. no. 86

"Two Angels"
Herat?, c. 1425-30

a Timurid warrior in full battle regalia spearing a dragon, simultaneously alludes to Bahram Gur's famed encounter in the *Khamsa* of Nizami as well as to Timurid prowess in the field (cat. no. 82). Another work based on the same text shows an unusually informal rendition, almost a caricature, of one of the canonical images of Persian painting, "Khusraw Spies Shirin Bathing" (cat. no. 83).

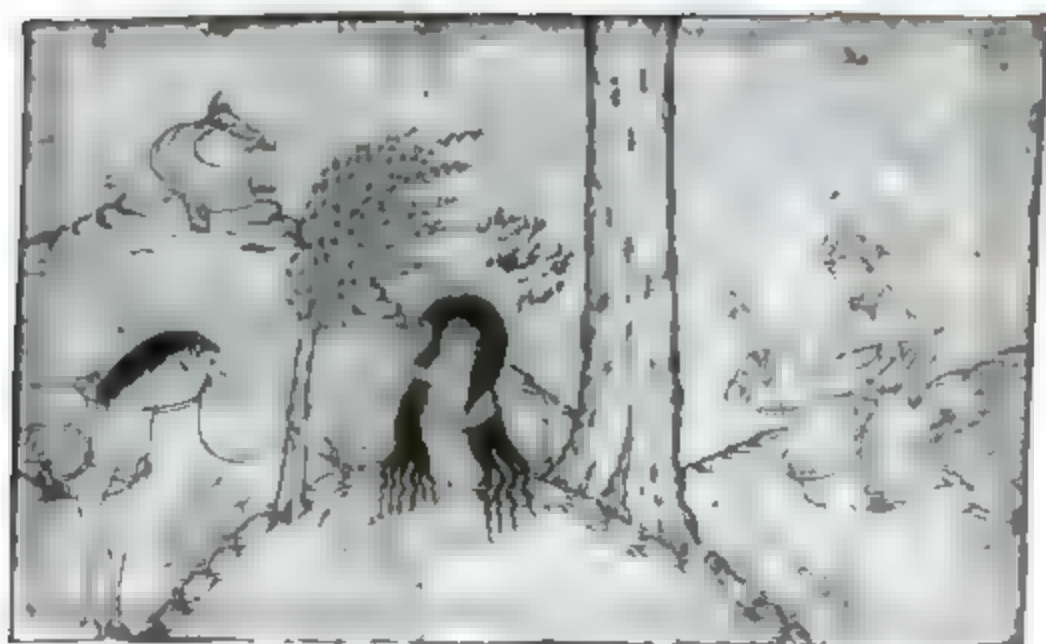
The most luxurious and rarest survivals of Timurid painting in the pictorial category are those on silk, a common surface for painting in Chinese practice but one infrequently used in the *kitabkhana*. Often these Timurid works appear like stage sets with brilliantly costumed figures positioned on horizontal groundlines, their expressive qualities dependent upon delicacy of line and a radiant palette (cat. no. 84). Typical of many of these works is a painting of four figures, most likely a royal couple with attendants, flanking a tree surrounded by flowering plants (cat. no. 85); rooted like brilliant flowers and, in fact, treated as such, these figures are ingeniously depicted with the conventions of manuscript painting. As a result, the literary and elitist associations of illustrated books are evoked, though whether they record a specific event or served as a gen-



185

cat. no. 80 (right)

"Angel Hovering above Flames"
Shirazi(?), c. 1400-1425



cat. no. 81

"Khamsraw Spies Shirin Bathing"
Iran, c. 1400-1450



cat. no. 84

"A Princely Couple with Attendants"
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1425-50



cat. no. 85

"Four Figures beneath a Tree"
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1425-50

eral evocation of such gatherings is unknown.

Other works on silk draw directly from Chinese models, and the albums contain examples of both Chinese originals and kitabkhana imitations of Chinese paintings, embroideries, and decorative objects. For example, by transposing elements from the Chinese bird-and-flower genre so common in a number of Istanbul albums,³⁵ Timurid artists achieved uniquely effective and imaginative results with scale and space (cat. no. 86).

This common Timurid practice of looking to Chinese models for inspiration took the form of either close, meticulous copies or imaginative new fusions. Most of the Chinese originals available to Timurid workshops were probably of inferior provincial quality, a view supported by the vast majority of the surviving Chinese works in the albums. On at least one occasion, however, an imperial Chinese painting was sent to the

Timurid court: in 1417 an embassy arrived bearing a painting, ordered by the Ming emperor, of two grooms with the white horse the Timurid Amir Sayyid Ahmad Tarkhan had sent as a gift on an earlier mission.³⁶ The Timurid duplication of Chinese originals is typically represented by a large, tinted reed-pen copy of a Chinese drawing of two *lohans* (canonical Buddhist saints; cat. no. 87). Of exceptional quality, it clearly was intended to reproduce the effect of the original, likely a Yuan-period work, but it reduced volume and contour to a patterned design of sharply defined arcs and points.³⁷

187



cat. no. 87

"Two Lohans"

Iran or Central Asia, c. 1400–1450

cat. no. 86

"A Prince Seated in a Garden"

Iran or Central Asia, c. 1415–50

This capacity to transform even ostensible copies is accentuated in another group of paintings, perhaps the most daring executed during Timurid rule, which combine Persian and Chinese elements. Found on both paper and silk primarily in the Topkapı albums H.2153 and H.2160, these works are for the most part closely based on Chinese models but executed in a Persian palette of brilliant reds, blues, yellows, and greens, often with lavish applications of gold. They stand almost entirely outside the bounds of the illustrative category.²⁸ In addition to bird-and-flower subjects there are elaborately costumed figures often fashioned into what from a Chinese viewpoint would be odd pastiches: incongruous combinations of figures, landscape details, and fantastic elements inhabit a skewed pictorial space. Combat, hunt, and genre scenes of a fantastic nature constitute the most spectacular examples of this painting (figs. 64–65). Marked by often large dimensions, strong sinicizing tendencies, and an absence of text, they are nonetheless Islamic creations, unprecedented experiments in picture making in the Persianate tradition. The paintings may draw elements from manuscript illustration but clearly operate in a pictorial rather than illustrative category, their scale and frequently unusual figural proportions forcing the usual conventions of manuscript illustration into dramatic new schemes. Their date and place of origin have long resisted identification, the suggestions ranging from

Samarqand under Timur, Herat under Shahrukh, or to Aqqoyunlu Tabriz in the late fifteenth century. Attempts have focused on isolating elements of style and vocabulary common to securely dated and localized contemporary illustrated manuscripts, but such an approach seems inappropriate since these works are manifestations of a different visual category.

The bulk of albums H.2153 and H.2160 consists of paintings, drawings, and primarily Turcoman calligraphies, with a group of the paintings assigned to late fifteenth-century Tabriz on the basis of signatures of or attributions to two well-known Aqqoyunlu artists, Darwesh-Muhammad and Shaykhi.²⁹ At the same time there is no convincing argument for excluding many of these works from Timurid ateliers. The dynasty's patronage embraced a wide range of visual innovations, and Herat in particular was capable of providing the sophisticated workshop system, superior talent, and imaginative patronage necessary to bring this new painting into existence. The fact that the inventive, unorthodox character of these paintings is absent from Timurid manuscript illustration becomes irrelevant when the dynasty's broader, more liberated pictorial capabilities outside the context of book painting are taken into consideration. It is not unreasonable to suggest that many of these paintings were yet another flowering of Timurid visual creativity in the pictorial category.



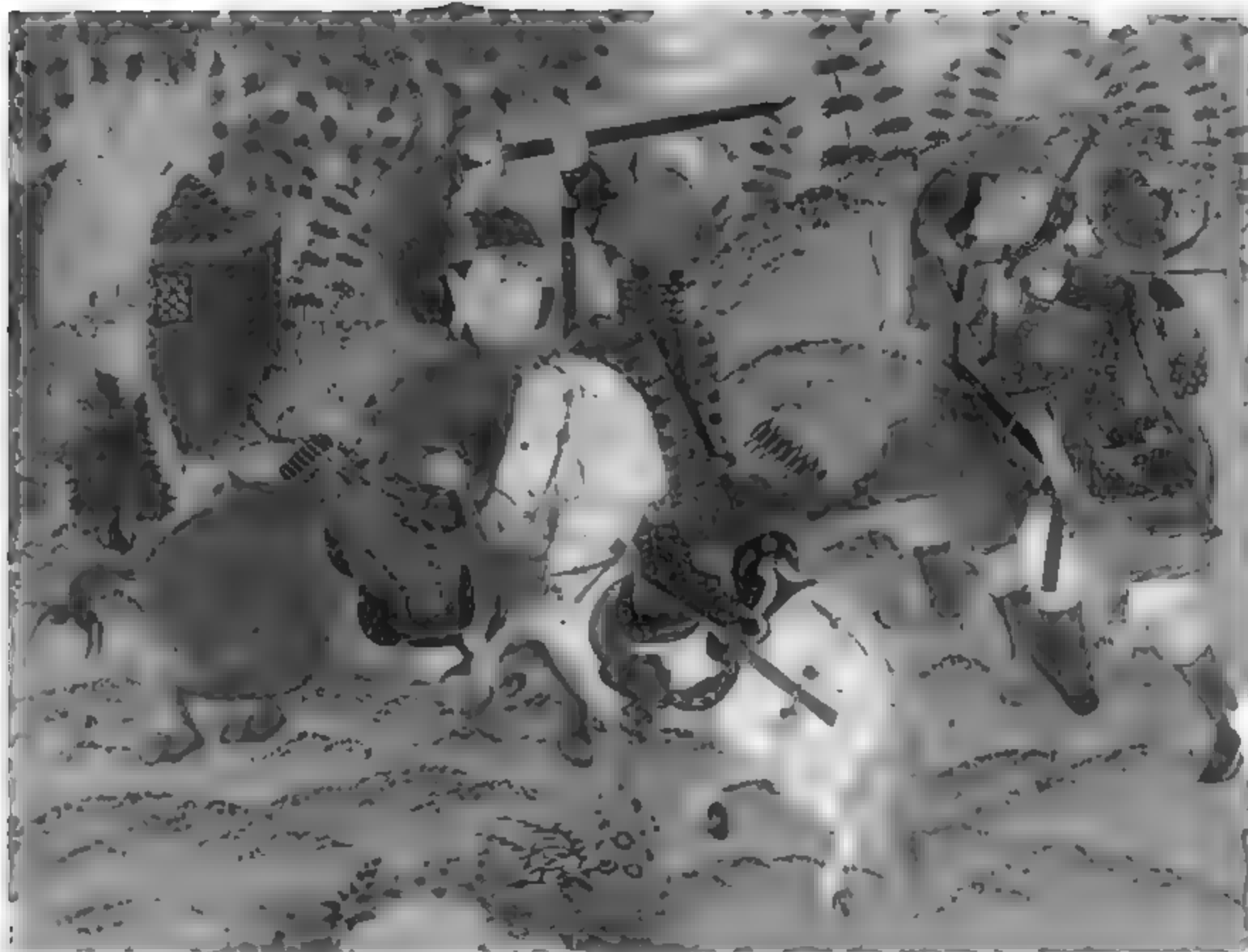


fig. 64

"The Duel"

Iran or Central Asia, fifteenth century
Opaque watercolor and gold on paper
27.5 x 36.5 cm (10 7/8 x 14 3/8 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H.2153, f. 138b

DECORATIVE

The third and final category guided much of Timurid artistic production through a far wider range of media and formats. The variety of extant material is considerable.¹⁰ Stressing both figural and nonfigural imagery, the category's function, at least in relation to the other categories, would appear to be decorative, its imagery more abstract. The drawings in the albums allow one to see the continuity of designs in this category and draw broad conclusions about its properties.

While examples of this category are present in illustrations, where it can be seen depicted on walls and objects, it was more commonly seen on wood, metal, and stone objects (cat. nos. 49, 88–89) and the bindings and pages of manuscripts (cat. nos. 40, 146, ill. p. 190). It also appears on an assortment of furniture and accoutrements such as saddle covers, banners, umbrellas, quivers, shields, and costumes that survive for the most part only in Timurid paintings. In all these examples the Timurid penchant for standardization is apparent in combination with traits greatly suppressed in manuscript illustration. Reduction of diverse imagery to a system—a set of stereotypical components that

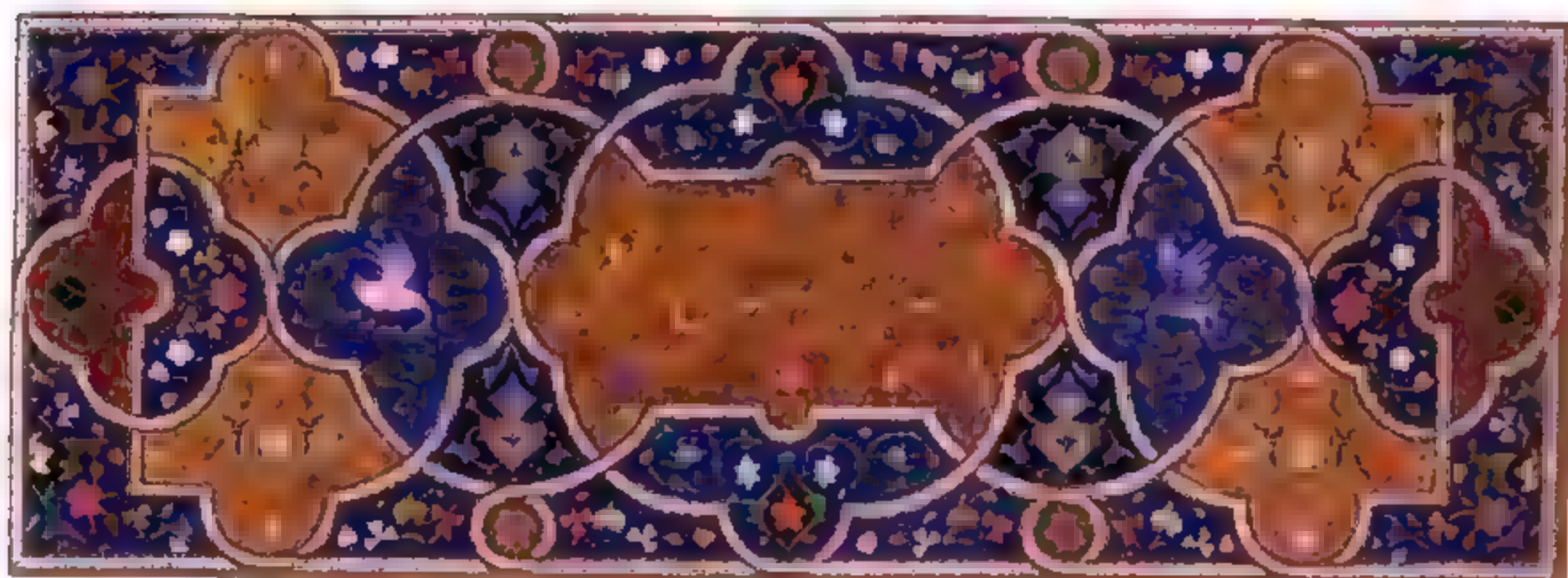
fig. 65

"Procession Scene"

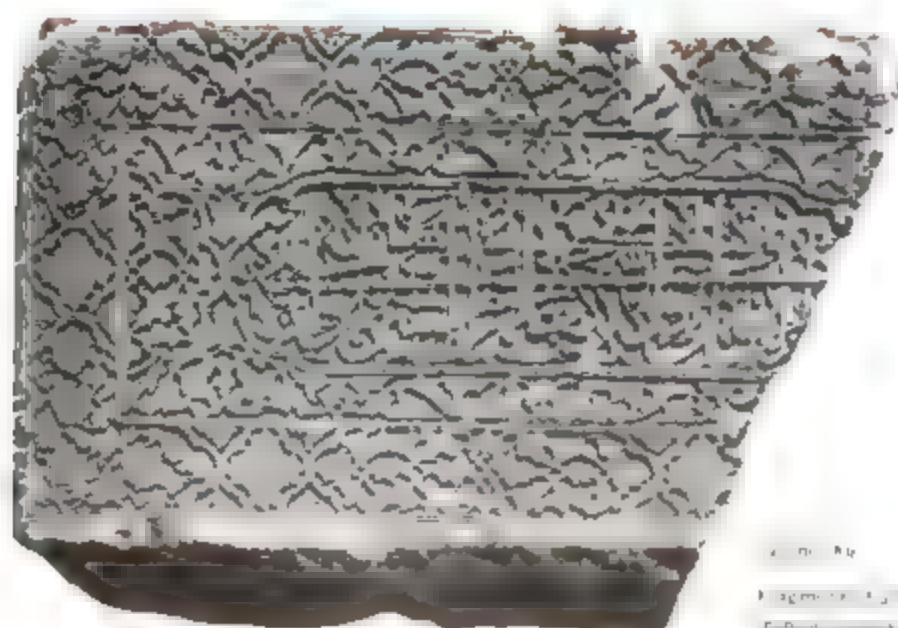
Iran or Central Asia, fifteenth century
Opaque watercolor and gold on paper
33 x 87 cm (13 x 34 1/8 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H.2153, ff. 3b–4a; H.2160, f. 77b



cat. no. 88
Jug
Herat, dated A.H. Jumada II 873
(A.H. January 1468)



cat. no. 146
Illuminated panel from a Bustan
of Sa'di (deras)
Herat, dated A.H. Rajab 893
(A.D. June 1488,
F. 4b)



cat. no. 89
Fragment of an inscription
Herat, dated A.H. 1410-1500



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rely on repetition and consistency of form for their effect—remained the fundamental premise of this category, yet the decorative category was also a vehicle for individual expression. The illusionistic qualities of works in this category were achieved through modeling and calligraphic modulation of line, due in part to the fine brushes used in *sryah-qalamī* (black-line drawing). Such qualities once more alter rigid notions about the Timurid kitabkhana's capabilities and inclinations that have prevailed in Western scholarship.

Influences from East Asia played a fundamental role in defining the decorative category. Commercial exchanges with the Ming court reflected the Timurids' interest in all things Chinese and are often cited as the primary conduit for the flow of Chinese ornament into Timurid art. Ghiyathuddin's account of the travels of one embassy through Central Asia and western China to the Ming court records the profound impression that Chinese art left on Timurid representatives. He repeatedly marvels at the wealth and splendor of fig-

ural imagery and ornament, which inspired a number of decorative idioms in the Timurid kitabkhana:

In Qamul was a temple five hundred cubits square, in the middle of which was a [reclining] idol fifty cubits tall, nine cubits wide at the feet, and twenty-one cubits the circumference of the head. Over and behind it were other idols [each one cubit long more or less], and in that temple were representations [of bakhshīs] that moved in such a way that the viewer imagined they were alive. On the walls were beautiful, intricate paintings. The above-mentioned statue had one arm under its head and the other over its face, and the whole thing was gilded and clothed with various garments. It was called Shakamuni. The infidels bowed down in droves before it. All around the temple were buildings like cells in a caravansary, all adorned with gold-spun curtains, gilded platforms (*kursi*), chairs, candlesticks, and banqueting vessels.¹¹



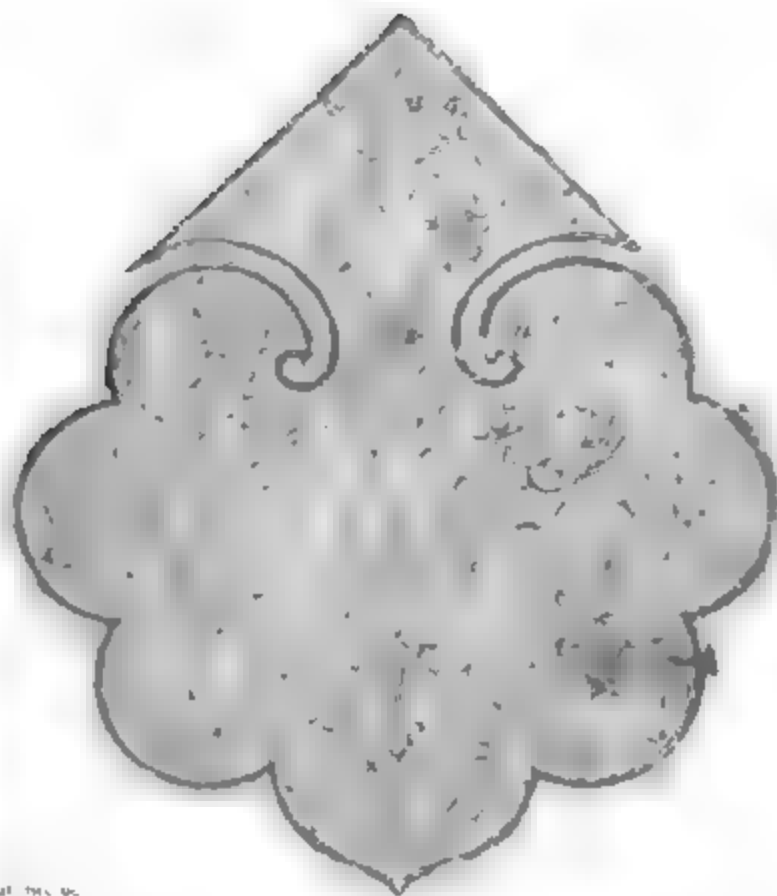
Figure 4
The top and exterior of the
book cover of a *Sifta* of Aḥmad
Heraī, dated A.H. 27 Shawwāl 841
A.D. 23 April 1458



fig. 64 (left),
 "Rustam Slays the White Div" (detail)
 From a *Shahname* of Firdaws copied
 for Bayanshah ibn Shahrukh
 Herat, dated A.H. Jumada I 811
 (A.D. January 1410)
 Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
 on paper
 14 x 26 cm (5 1/2 x 10 1/4 in.)
 Tehran, Golestan Palace Library, no. 61



cat. no. 91
 Design for a quarter
 Iran, c. 1400-1410

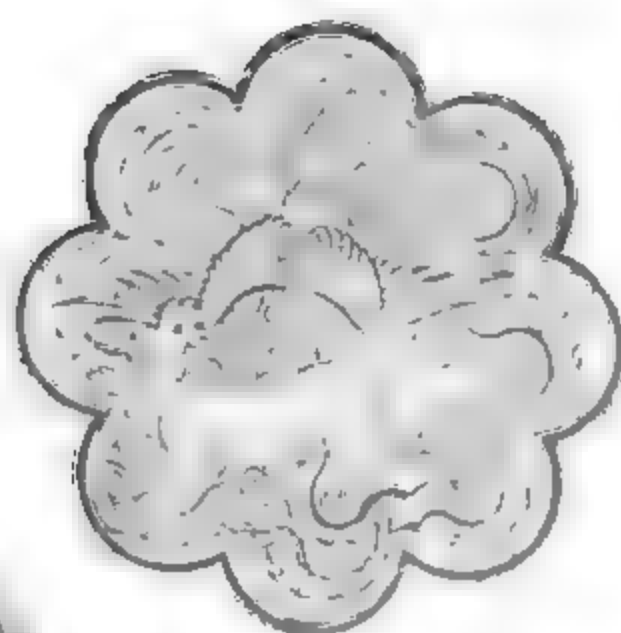
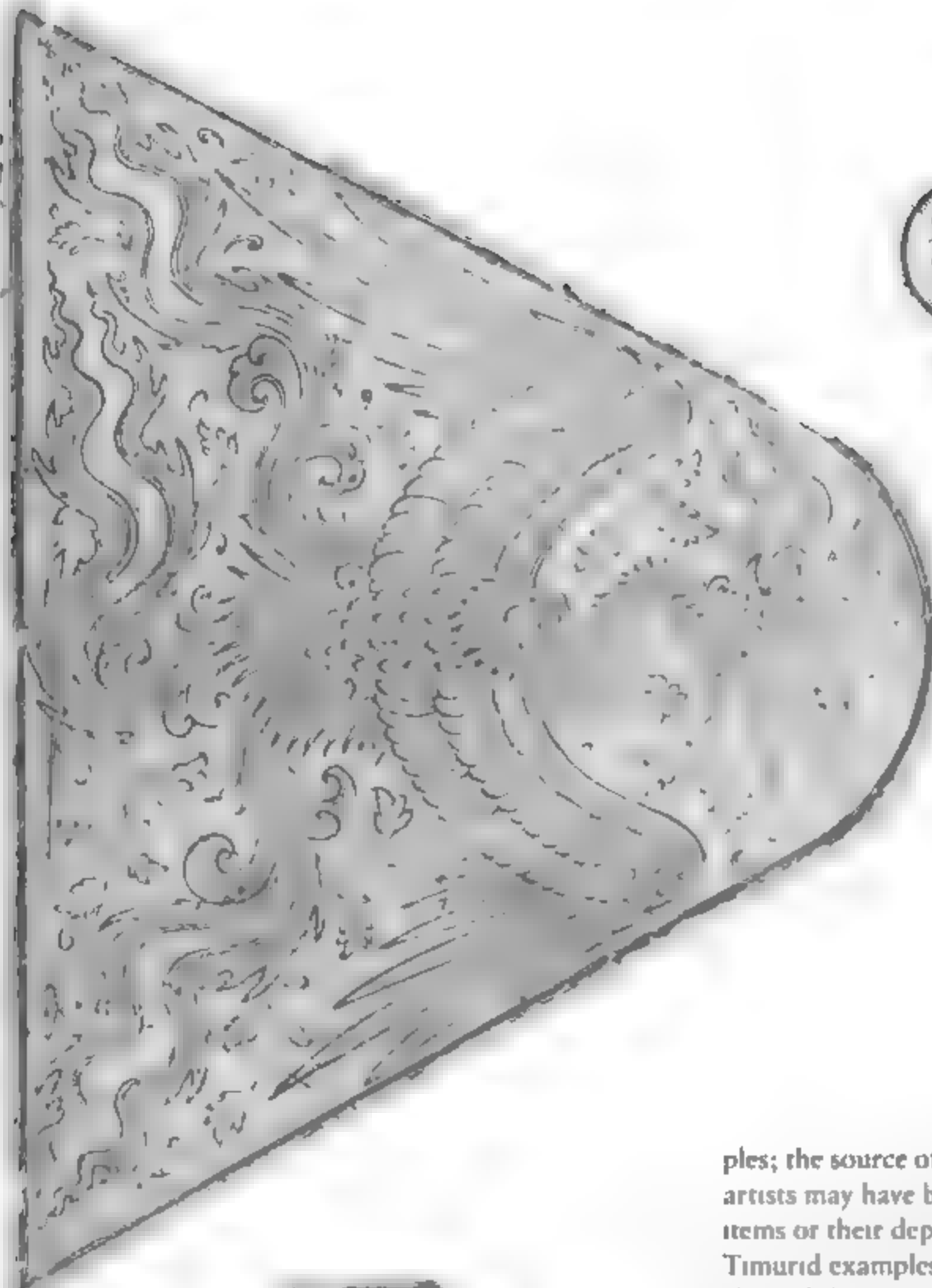


cat. no. 92
 Cloud collar point with fantastic plant
 Iran, c. 1400-1410

Ghiyathuddin's description of the paintings in another temple in the town of Jiading fu evokes the dizzying effect of so many strange pictures: "There are mountains, slopes, and caves drawn, and next to each of them are temples (*ma'bad*) with pictures of monks (*bakhshis*) and yogis seated in retreat and performing exercises. With brushes of magic they have painted [rams], tigers, leopards, dragons, and trees, and on the walls of the temple are paintings done with consummate expertise and mastery."¹²

There is much speculation whether Ghiyathuddin painted and sketched impressions of his journey; numerous paintings and drawings of "Chinese" character preserved in the Istanbul and Berlin albums are sometimes attributed to this trip. Whether he made direct copies or fashioned new syntheses, the distinction for Timurid artists between the actual copying of Chinese models and Timurid "chinoiserie" was frequently blurred. The latter may have developed independently, since the number of specific Chinese imitations that have survived is limited.

The exact means of transmission and development remain unclear, but no kitabkhana works are more symptomatic of the Timurid genius for the assimilation of East Asian artistic ideas than an extraordinary series of album drawings enclosed in medallions, cloud collar points, and frames, their outlines often lobed or cusped (cat. no. 90). Framing devices had long been employed in the Islamic world, but after the Mongol invasions their forms coincided more closely with Chinese exam-

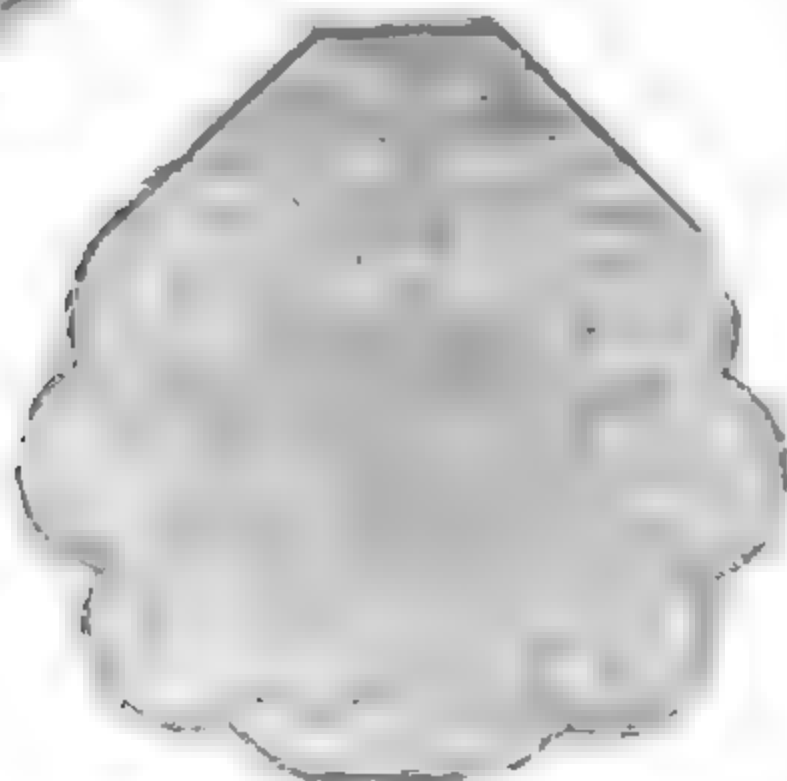


cat. no. 92

Tribeled medallion with animal combat
Iran, c. 1400–1450

cat. no. 91

Panel with phoenix
Iran, c. 1600–1650



ples; the source of this influence for earlier Iranian artists may have been Chinese furniture and related items or their depiction in Chinese paintings.⁴³ Timurid examples were likely inspired by similar models, and their primary purpose remained decorative. They were apparently made for transfer to other surfaces, a function quite obvious in a design for a quiver (cat. no. 91, fig. 66).

These drawings convincingly demonstrate the Timurid artists' inventive synthesis of specific needs and tastes and the models made available to them. Typical of their playing with and against Chinese conventions are animal combats, including decidedly un-Chinese confrontations like a spotted leonine predator and the phoenix (cat. no. 92), single animals in clouds and vegetation (cat. nos. 93–95), and fantastic landscapes with imaginary inhabitants (cat. no. 96).

cat. no. 94

Medallion with peacock
Iran, c. 1400–1450



cat. no. 96

cloud collar point with fantastic
beings

Iran, c. 1400-1450

Timurid visual pyrotechnics are even more apparent in the recasting of traditional Islamic motifs. The infusion of Chinese elements created exquisite new effects, as in an arabesque transformed into a lacy medallion of stylized calligraphy and exotic vegetation (cat. no. 97). In another example traditional Chinese motifs are recombined: an arabesque of interlaced birds revolves around a swirling tortoise in a stunning display of kitabkhana imagination (cat. no. 98). The balance and symmetry that structure these panels is expected from Timurid artists but not the freewheeling, almost playful sense of fantasy that would inspire later generations of artists in Iran, Turkey, and India.

Statements in the *arzadasht* and design patterns in

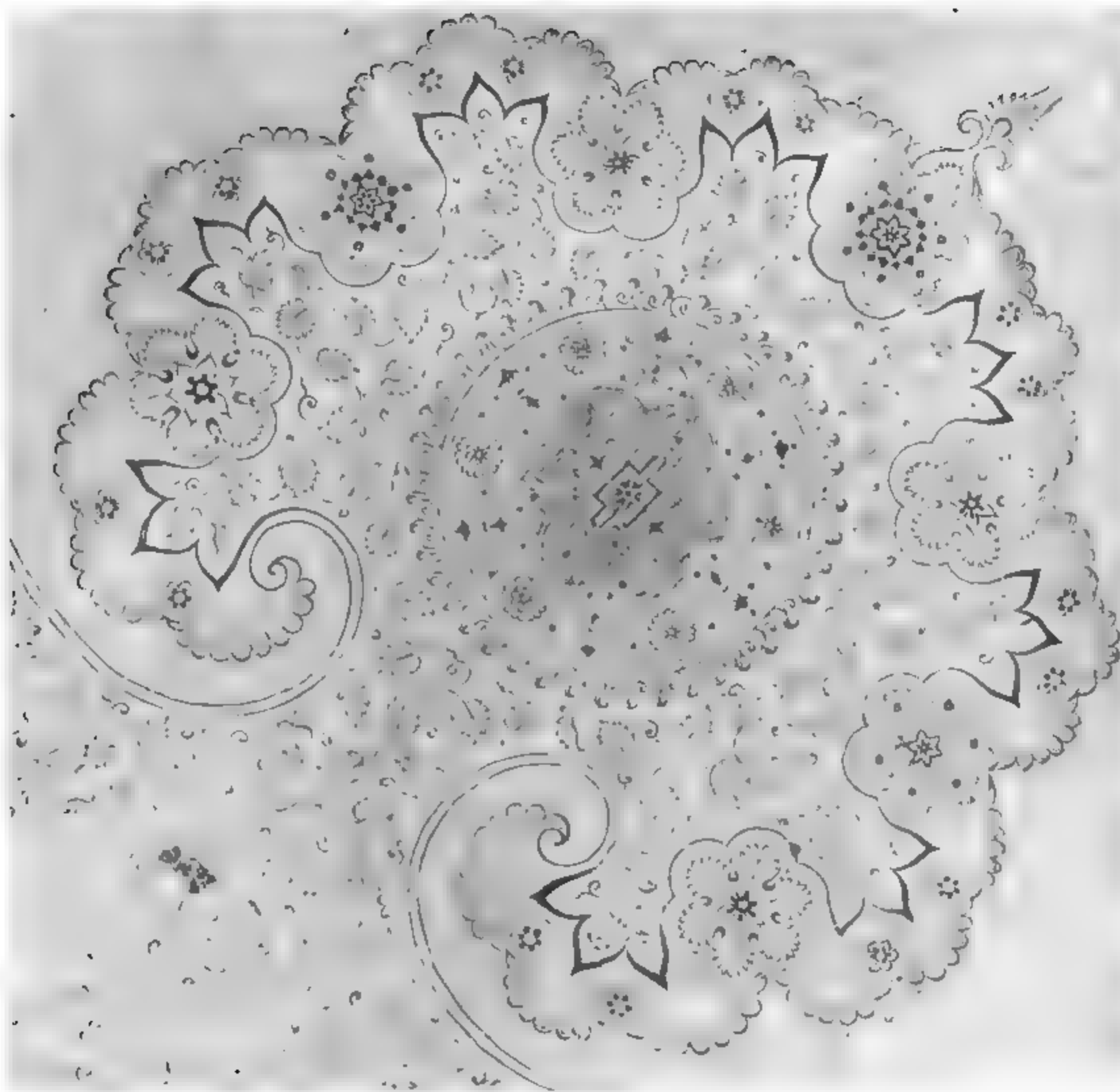
the albums confirm that the kitabkhana was the major source of Timurid decorative schemes. The Topkapı album H.2152 alone has no fewer than fifteen sheets of patterns (fig. 67), mainly arabesque designs, which resemble extant wall painting, manuscript illumination and binding, wood and stone carving, and even tile work.¹⁴ Models like these can be classified in divisions similar to those in Sadiq Beg's *Qanun*. Uncertainty over the precise meaning of the terminology used frustrates any attempt to draw exact correspondences between Timurid and Safavid decorative idioms, yet both traditions share a distinctive schematic organization that distinguishes visual elements by their function, that of decorating the surfaces of a variety of media.

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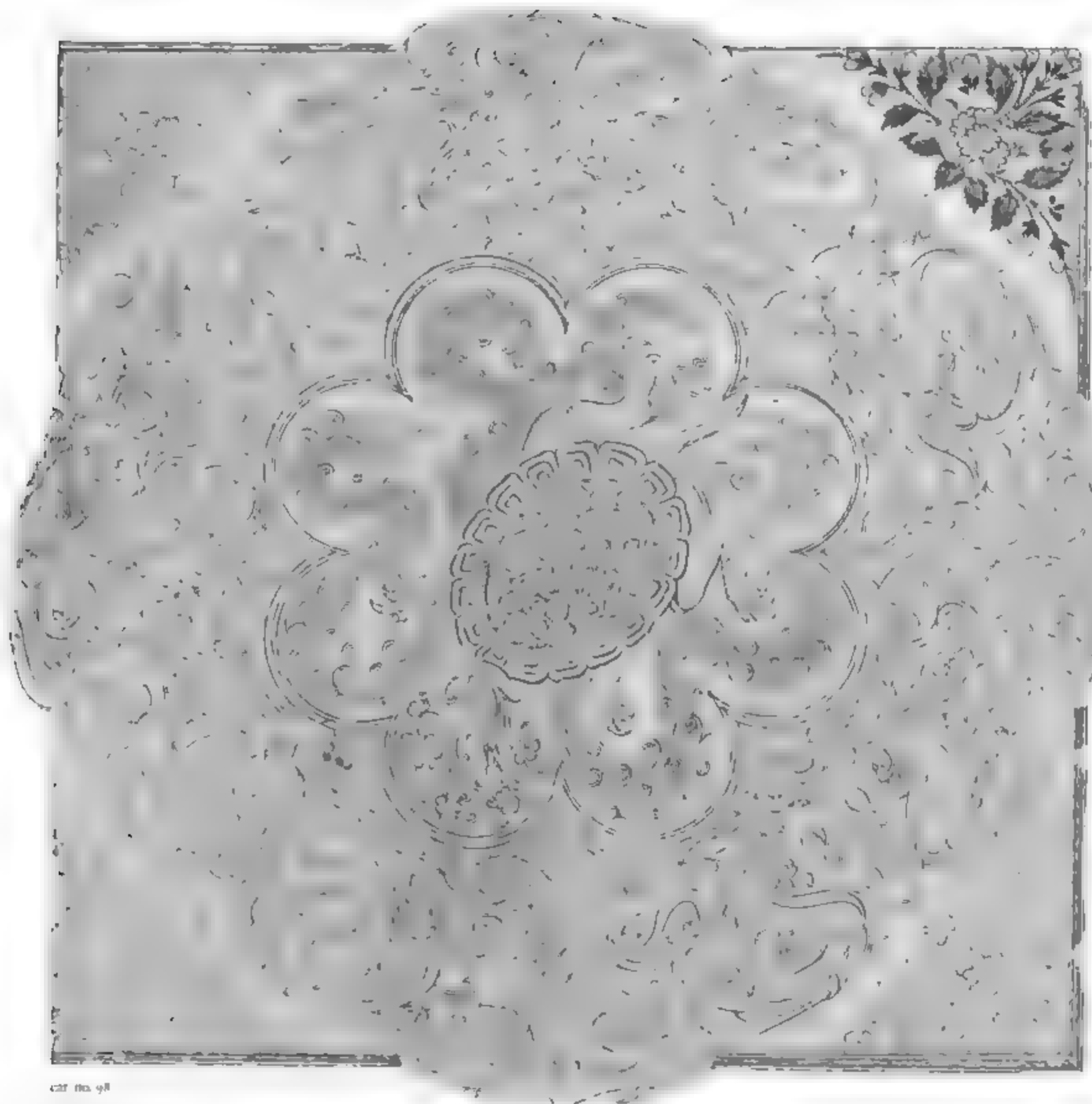
cat. no. 91

Cloud collar poem with crane
Iran, c. 1400–1450



cat. no. 97

Cloud collar print with kufic
medallion
Iran, c. 1400-1450



cat. no. 98

Medallion with Kufic
Iran, c. 1400-1450

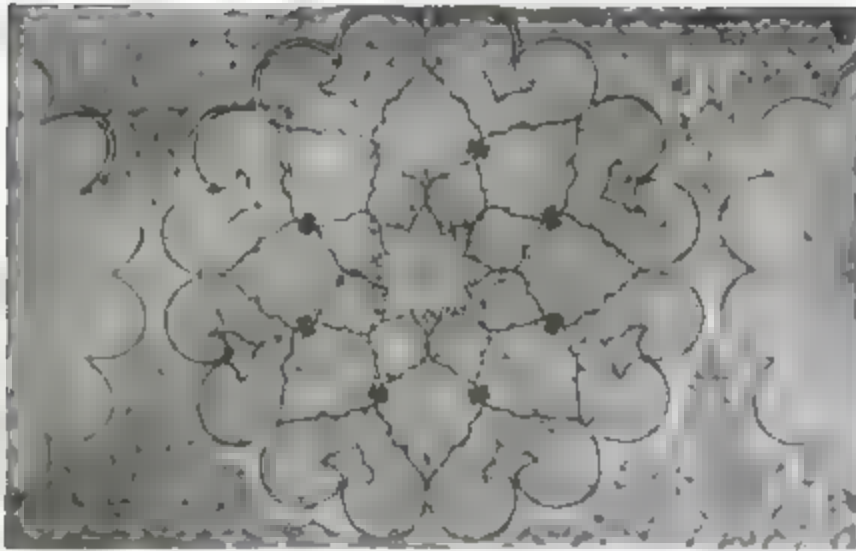
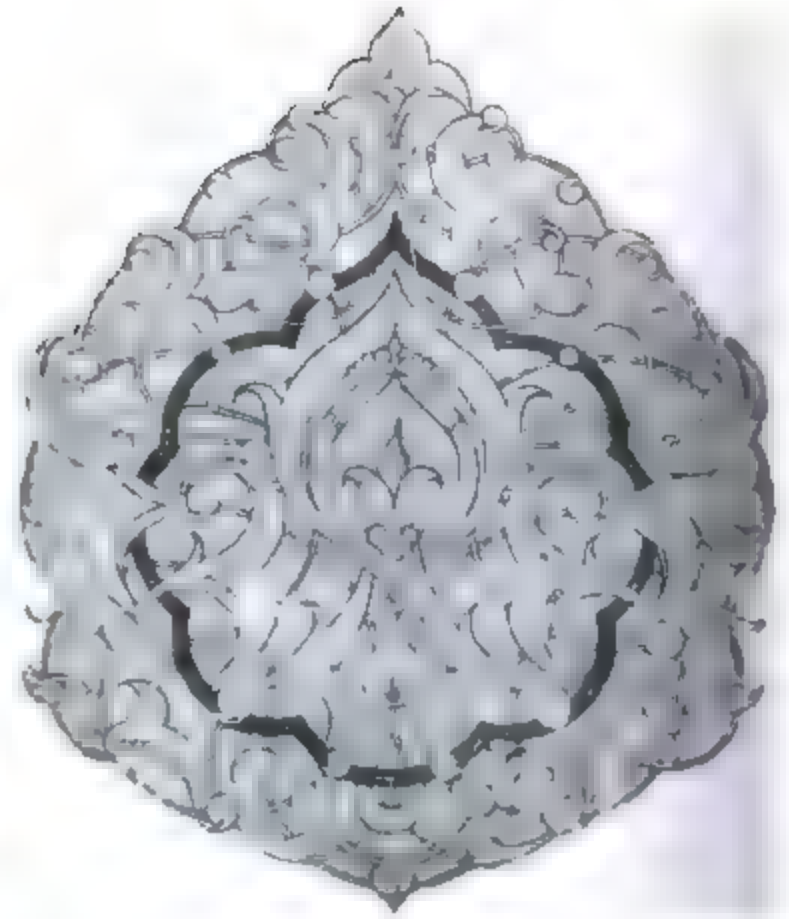


fig. 87

Pattern sheet
Iran, c. 1425–50
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Isfahan, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H. 2192, f. 91a



cat. no. 100 above
Arabesque medallion
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1400–1450

cat. no. 99 below
Interior binding of a *Mathnawī-
i ma'nawī* of Jalāluddīn Rūmī
Herat, dated A.H. 887 (A.D. 1481)

Decoration of manuscripts through illumination and the embellishment of borders and bindings took characteristically elegant forms under the Timurids. A brilliant exposition of this category is found on the interior binding of Rumi's *Mathnawī-i ma'nawī* (Spiritual Mathnawī; 1483) executed at Herat for Sultan-Husayn Mirza (cat. no. 99). With passion and wit, it portrays an imaginary forest of flowering plants, clouds, and frolicking creatures. Its leather filigree is cut with daring, intricate precision, and the articulation of the most minute details, including fur and the veining of leaves, embodies an emotionalism absent in manuscript illustration.

Illumination in royal books redefined and elaborated past formulae, whether of Il-Khanid, Mamluk, Jalayirid, or Muzaffarid origin, and epitomized the kitabkhana's talent for invention within established models (cat. no. 100). A comparison of Sultan Ahmad's *Diwan* executed for the Jalayirid ruler at Baghdad in 1404 (cat. no. 15) with a *Jamī' al-usul* (Gatherer of principles) probably done at Herat in 1435–36 (cat. no. 101) demonstrates the ability of Timurid artists to transform and revitalize the same vocabulary. The Timurid illumination reads as a brilliant formal exercise: the depth and purity of its richer pigmentation resonates through a spidery lattice, whose effect is heightened by an increased precision of line. This greater emphasis on delicacy and lyricism is also evi-





cat. no. 99 (detail)

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Illuminated frontispiece of a
Jami al-Asal of Ibn al-Arabi

Herat, dated A.H. 819 (A.D. 1431-32)

ff. 1b-2a







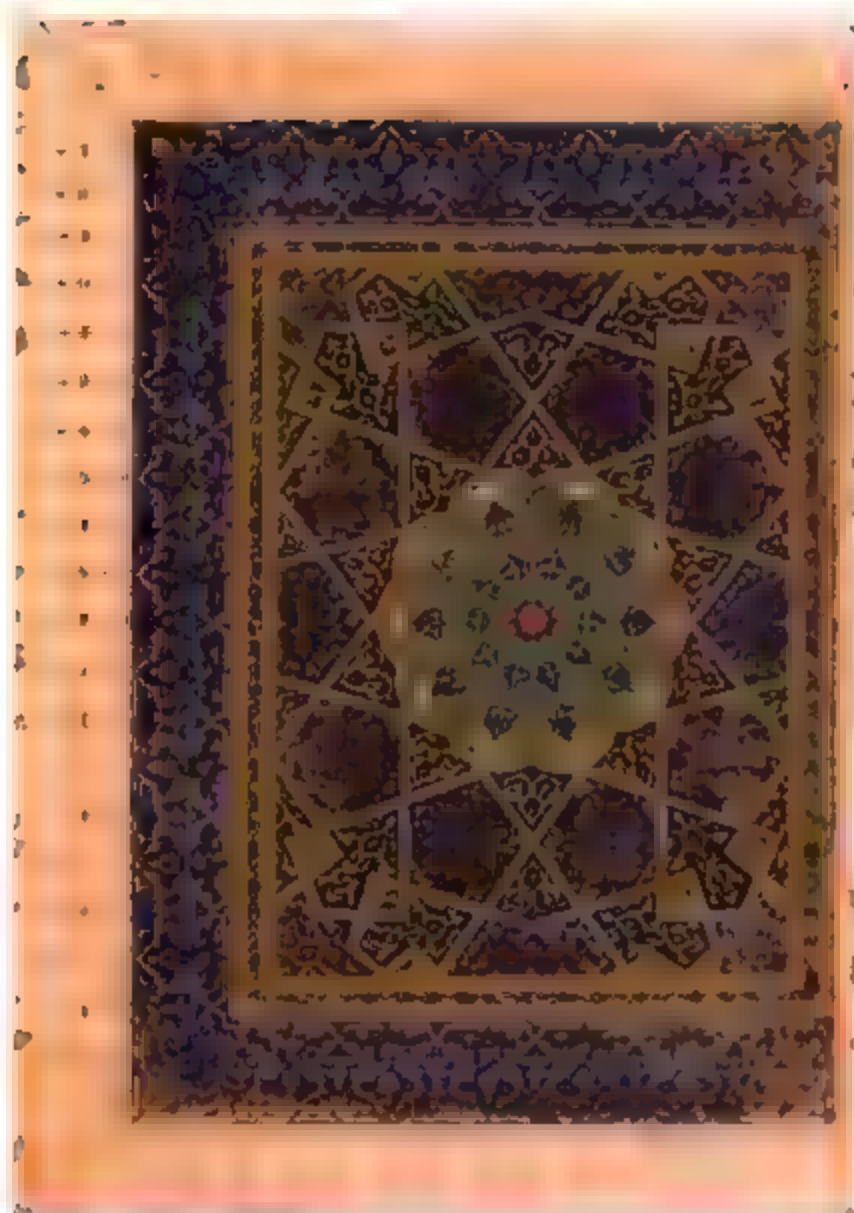
cat. no. 105

Three folios from an *Anthology*
of Ghazali

Iran, dated A.H. Rajab 853

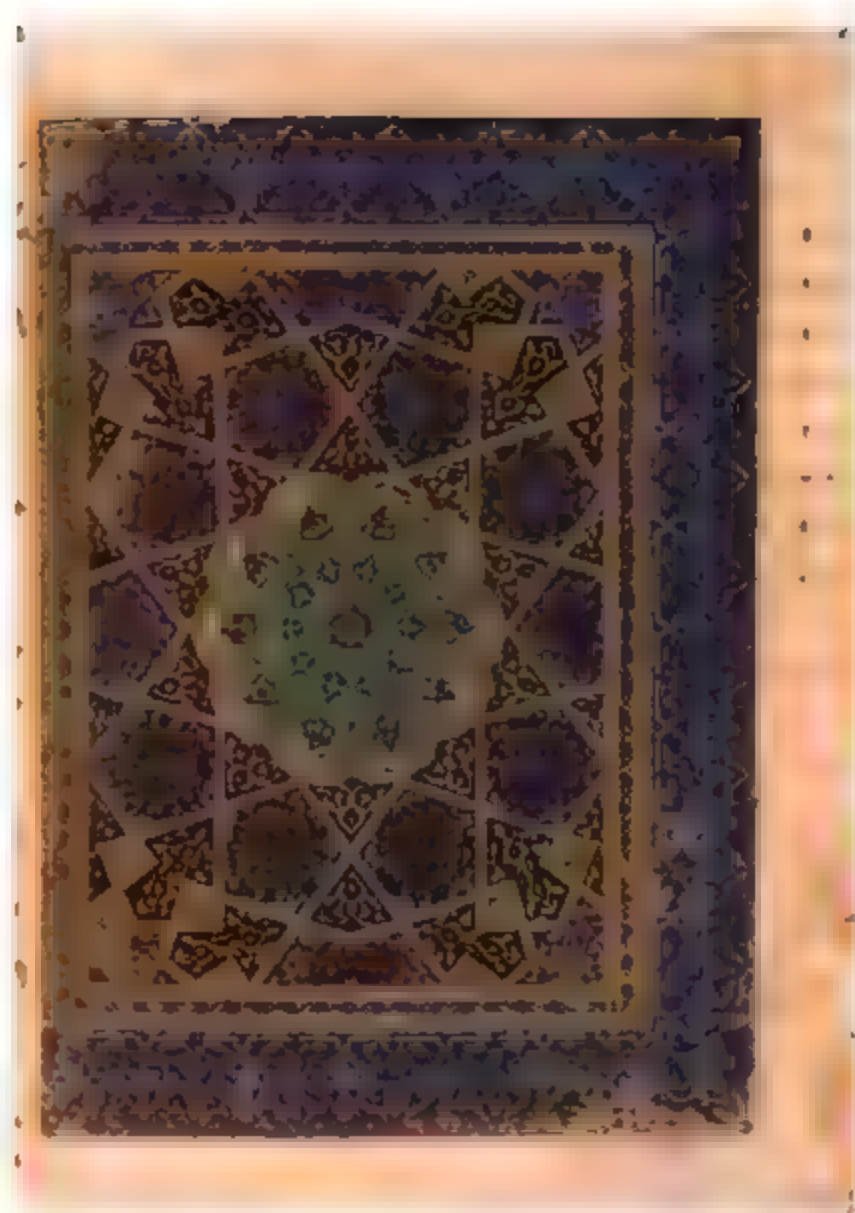
[A.H. July–August 1449]

ff. 42b, 43a, 44



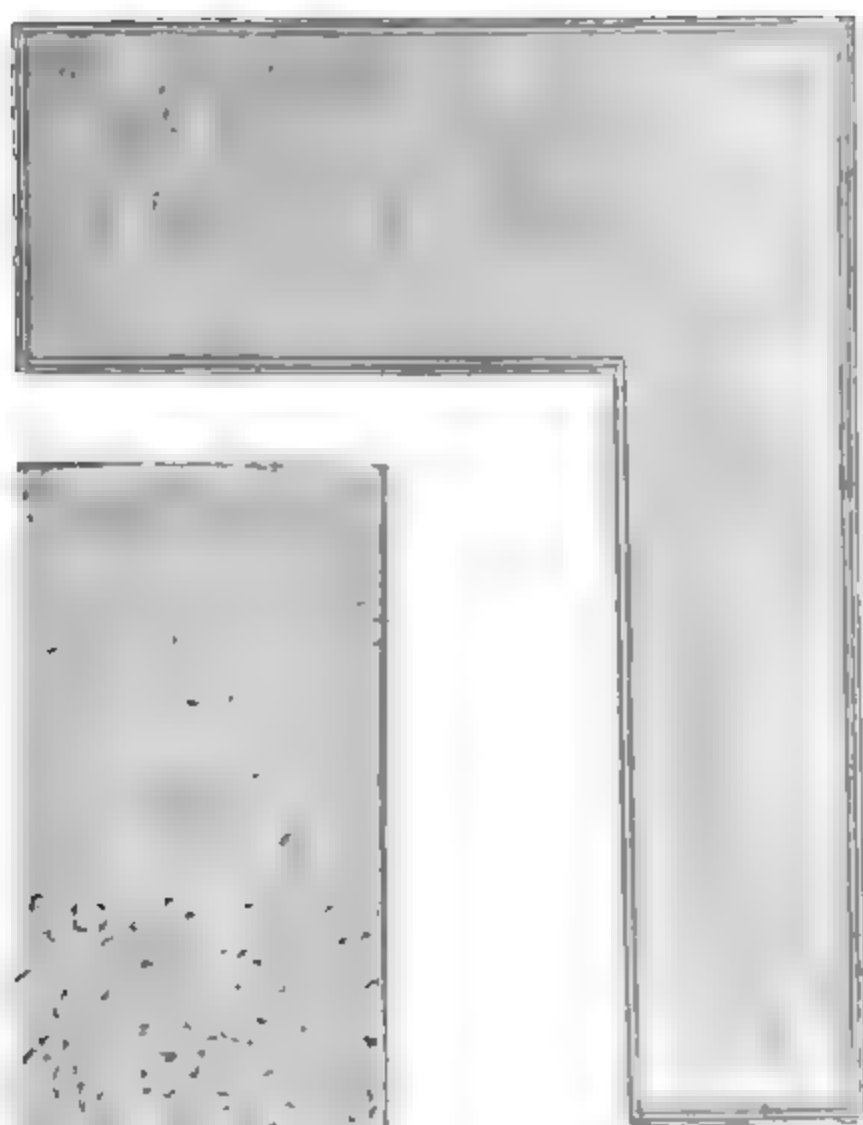
cat. no. 102

Illuminated frontispiece of a Koran
 Herat?, c. 1425–50
 H 1b 2a



dent in a Timurid Koran of the mid-fifteenth century (cat. no. 102), in which decorative schemes favored in Mamluk and Il-Khanid manuscripts, such as the centrifugal composition in the illumination of opening folios, are refined and subtly altered by delicate fillings of tracery.

Timurid illumination is ultimately distinctive for the controlled, otherworldly acrobatics of its arabesque patterns. A balance of easy cadence and tensile grace legibly orders complex networks of geometric, floral, and vegetal elements that often cradle medallions or compartments of inscriptions (cat. no. 103). The imaginative manipulation of color—in tone, range, and juxtaposition—is equally responsible for the works' transcendent effect.



cat. no. 104 (above)

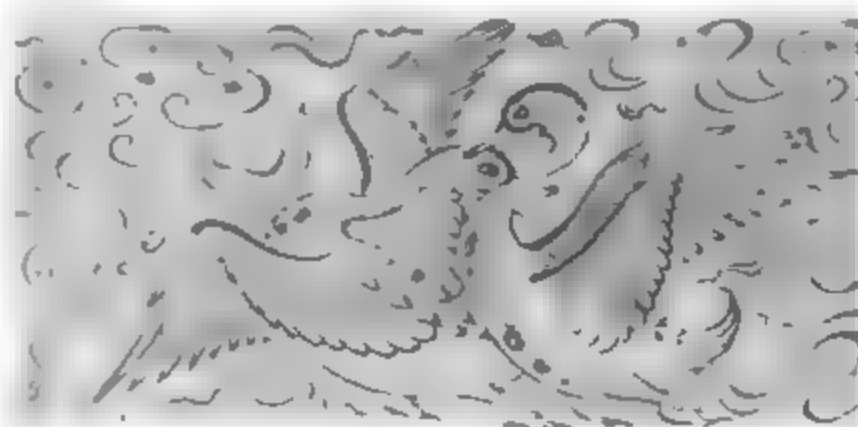
Design for the corner of a margin
Iran, c. 1480–90

cat. no. 104 (left)

Design for a panel
Shiraz, c. 1480–90

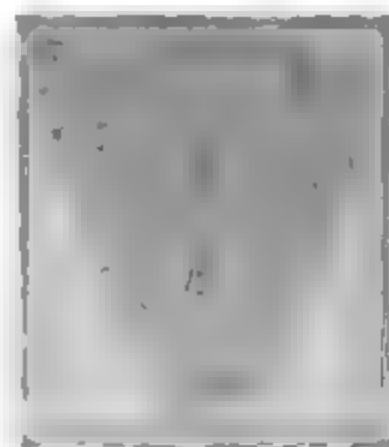
Along with illumination, marginal drawing schemes, some still preserved in their workshop formats, were important elements of Timurid books, characteristically featuring an assortment of idyllic landscapes, animal combats, and mythical creatures (cat. nos. 104–5). These were often accompanied by an array of floral and vegetal patterns remarkable for their calligraphic line (cat. no. 106). The manuscripts done for Iskandar-Sultan at Shiraz are noted for marginalia of this type (cat. no. 107), often tinted with pale color washes. Another group of marginal drawings, somewhat less ethereal in effect, can be linked to Herat (cat. no. 108); verging on the naturalistic in palette, these Herat schemes decorated manuscript pages and separate design sheets executed for both Shahrukh and Baysunghur (cat. no. 38, f. 143b) as well as the surfaces of walls.¹⁵

The need to ornament and embellish manuscript pages led the kitabkhana also to experiment with a stenciling technique (cat. no. 103, f. 42b), which was combined with gilding to produce an array of geometric, figural, and vegetal openwork patterns.¹⁶ While stenciling may not have been a specific Timurid invention, the nature of the technique was well suited to the Timurid penchant for repetition and codification, and it became an ideal vehicle for workshop innovations.



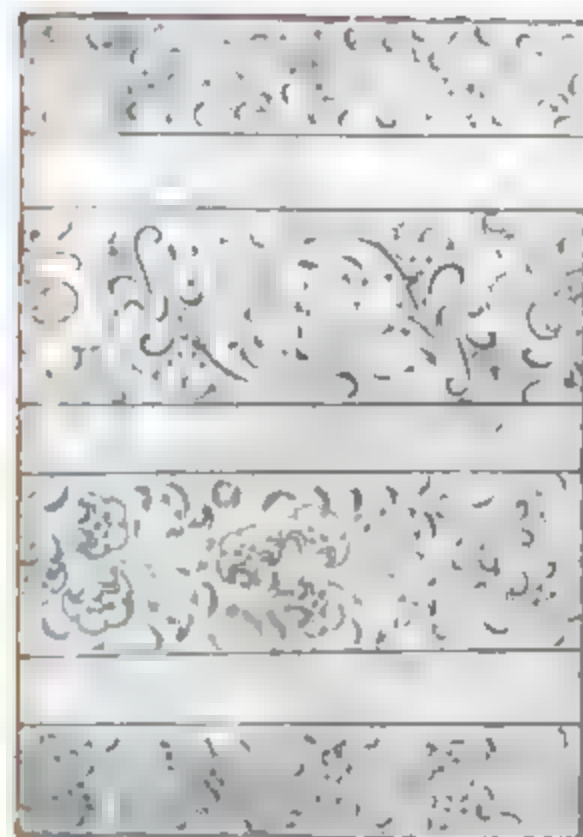
cat. no. 107 (above)

Ducks
Shiraz or Herat, c. 1480–1490



cat. no. 108 (left)

Floral and vegetal fragment with birds
Herat?, c. 1490



cat. no. 104

Panels of vegetal design
Iran, c. 1400-1450

cat. no. 105

Illuminated page from a *Khamsa*
of Nizami
Herat, dated A.H. 845
A.D. December 1411
f. 241b

By transferring decorative idioms generated by the kitabkhana to other media, a uniform vision was assured in all works produced for the Timurid elite. The more than thirty known examples of Timurid bronze or brass jugs from the second half of the fifteenth century demonstrate a consistency in both shape and the application of two-dimensional designs onto three-dimensional objects (cat. nos. 109–10). Using a form also worked in jade, these vessels have surfaces that were almost always inlaid with gold or silver (or both) and frequently set off against a black paste ground. The inlays consisted of stylized floral motifs along with inscriptions ranging from benedictions in Arabic to Persian verses of poets like Hafiz; this new decorative program eschewed the figural imagery that dominated so much of pre-Timurid metalwork. From the earliest surviving dated example of 1456–57, the shape remained unchanged, but the decoration gradually underwent a subtle transformation toward an increased use of small-scale, intricate design networks.³⁷ The dense surface patterns of these later jugs represent idiomatic responses to the dynasty's growing taste for the intricate.

The Timurid kitabkhana system infused the already rich pool of Iranian and Central Asian traditions of ornament with a heretofore unseen refinement. Woodwork became yet another receptive medium for Timurid aesthetic ideas.³⁸ Architectural components, mosque furniture, and small objects constitute the meager remains of what must have been a prolific output, yet enough survives to offer ample testimony to the impact of the dynasty's patronage on wood carving. The tradition for the most part was marked by a strong conservatism; the region from Anatolia to Central Asia, in fact, used a common vocabulary of forms and techniques whose rate of change from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to the Timurid period was subtle, with geographical and chronological distinctions often difficult to isolate. Fourteenth-century examples from Iran and Central Asia, like the scattered Il-Khanid examples from Sultaniyya³⁹ or the huge cenotaph of Sayfuddin Bakharzi at Bukhara,⁴⁰ serve as reminders of the impressive pre-Timurid traditions in those areas. Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of this pre-Timurid tradition is the astonishing technical capacity sometimes demonstrated in works like the Koran stand

cat. no. 109

Jug
Herat(?), dated A.H. 861 (A.D. 1456–57)



cat. no. 110

Jug
Herat(?), dated A.H. 866 (A.D. 1461–62)





cat. no. 111

Cenotaph of Taj al-Mulk wa'l-Din
Abu'l-Qasim
Mazanderan, dated A.H. Ramadan 877
(A.D. February 1473)

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cat. no. 49

Cover of the carved wooden box of
Ulugh-Beg ibn Shahrukh (detail)
Central Asia, c. 1430-49

dated 1359 (cat. no. 9), in which dense, superimposed networks of deeply undercut floral, vegetal, and calligraphic elements trigger a dramatic, illusionistic interplay of light and depth.

This taste for complexity increased under the Timurids, though their woodwork is characterized by surface articulation in a more abstract vein. Decoration gradually became the surface itself, as smaller-scale arabesque and floral motifs were organized into a lush, delicately woven screen that is generally less deeply





fig. 68

Doors to the main dome chamber of the Shrine of Ahmad Yasavi: detail, Turkistan, c. 1507

undercut. Works of this type were favored by the dynasty and appear fully developed, primarily as decoration for doors, at early Timurid sites in or near Samarqand: the Shrine of Ahmad Yasavi (fig. 68), the tomb of Qutham ibn Abbas at the Shah-i Zinda, the Gur-i Amir (fig. 15), the Gunbad-i Sayyidan at Shahr-i Sabz, and the madrasa of Ulugh-Beg. The crowning achievement of Timurid woodworking is undoubtedly Ulugh-Beg's box (cat. no. 49), whose mesmerizing surface epitomizes the distance traveled from older traditions. A cenotaph dated 1473 (cat. no. 111) from Mazandaran, however, demonstrates the persistence of indigenous ideas and techniques; its robust, geometrically organized surface recalls the earlier carving of the Caspian region rather than the sophisticated court circles of Samarqand and Herat.

Most Timurid wood carving for elite patrons was inspired by court artists' designs, and to the end of the fifteenth century stylistic variations of these idioms were transferred with ease to other media. The dis-

tinctive *haft qalam* (seven scripts) idiom of the later fifteenth century featured large blossoms and sharp, jagged petals in tightly coiled chinoiserie arabesques that were deemed suitable for wooden doors (fig. 69) as well as for stone tombstones (figs. 70–75).⁴¹ The close relationship between wood and stone carving under the Timurids is further evidence of a common source: the drawings and cartoons by kitabkhana artists (cat. no. 112). Works like the enigmatic stone "throne" now located at the Gur-i Amir (fig. 72), the marble railings at the same complex (fig. 73), or the enormous Koran stand commissioned by Ulugh-Beg in the Friday mosque at Samarqand (fig. 26) reflect in their tracery numerous parallels with contemporary illumination and bookbinding. Even calligraphic designs and the floral and vegetal designs found in the H.2152 album appear on stone tombstones at the Hazrat-Imam at Shahr-i Sabz (fig. 74).⁴² Inscriptions in stone, while less common, show design features of extraordinary quality and invention (fig. 75).



Fig. 70

Tombstone
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1450–1500
Stone
Height 114.3 cm (45 in.)
Boston, Isabella Stewart Gardner
Museum

Fig. 69

Door
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1450–1500
Wood with traces of pigment
203.4 x 76.2 cm (80 in. x 30 in.)
New York, The Metropolitan Museum
of Art, Rogers Fund, 1923, 23.67.7

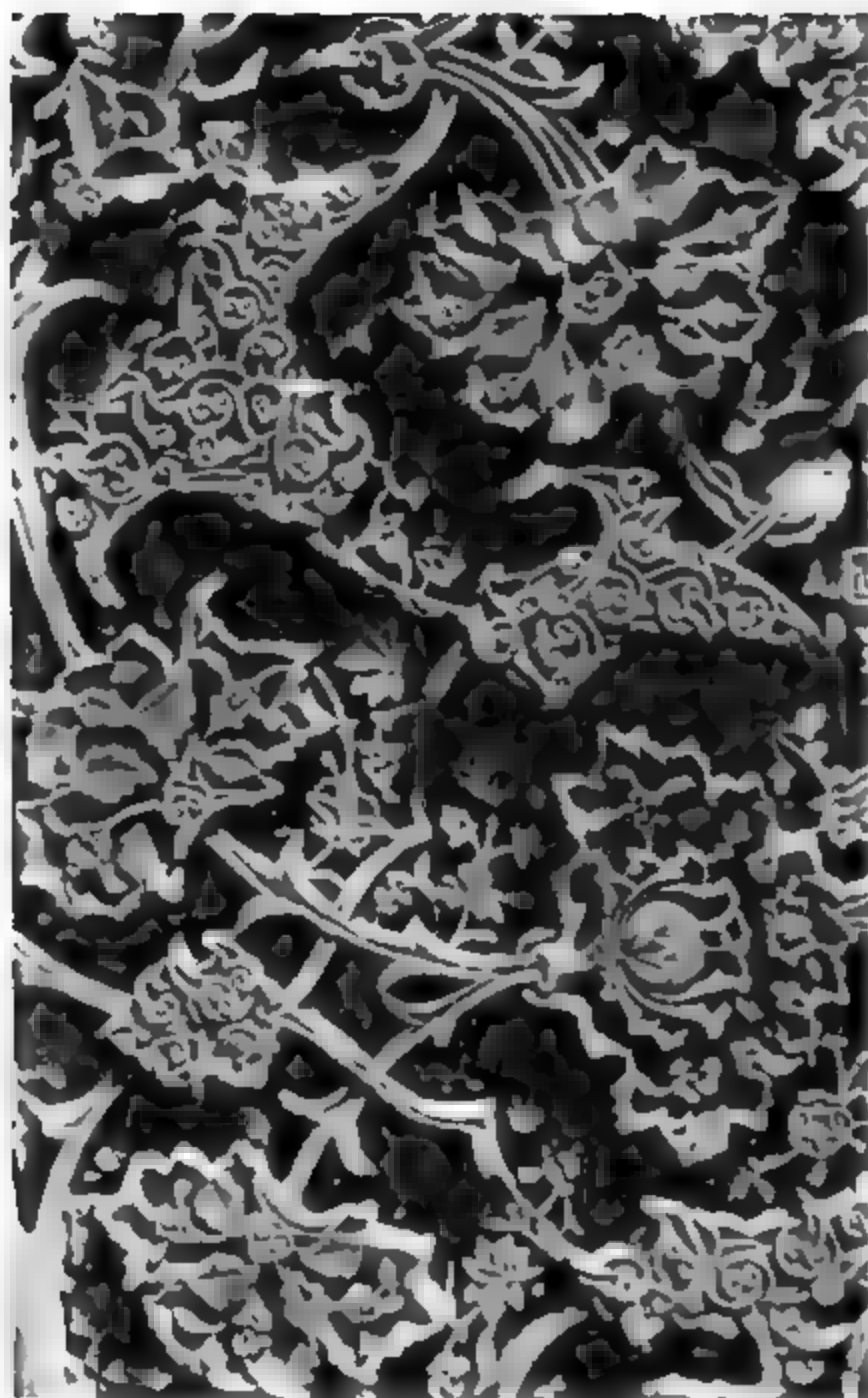


fig. 76

Tomestone (detail) of Ghiyathuddin
Mansur (d. 1445) in the madrasa of his
son Sultan-Husayn Mirza
Herat, c. 1415
Stone

In exploiting older indigenous traditions and the kitabkhana model, the Timurids produced ever more exhilarating results in the decoration of larger expanses of surface. Familiar patterns were re-created, but the increased scale of the visual field endowed these schemes with a force not present in smaller formats. Large areas of color and pattern, using precise, rhythmical repetition and stressing an ornamented sameness, create a facade of distance and impenetrability that is distinctly theatrical. As Timurid painting makes evident, the cumulative impact of these schemes in architecture, costume, carpets, and tents effectively idealized royal spaces. A similar transformation frequently occurred in Persian poetry in which the natural world was transformed into a luxurious, artificial setting.⁴¹ These transformations of the physical world suggest, as do the awestruck eyewitness accounts of Timurid ceremonies, a deliberate analogy between a stylized contrived realm and the exclusive domain of the princes.

Under Timurid patronage decoration was applied to



cat. no. 113

Vegetal design
Iran, c. 1400-1450

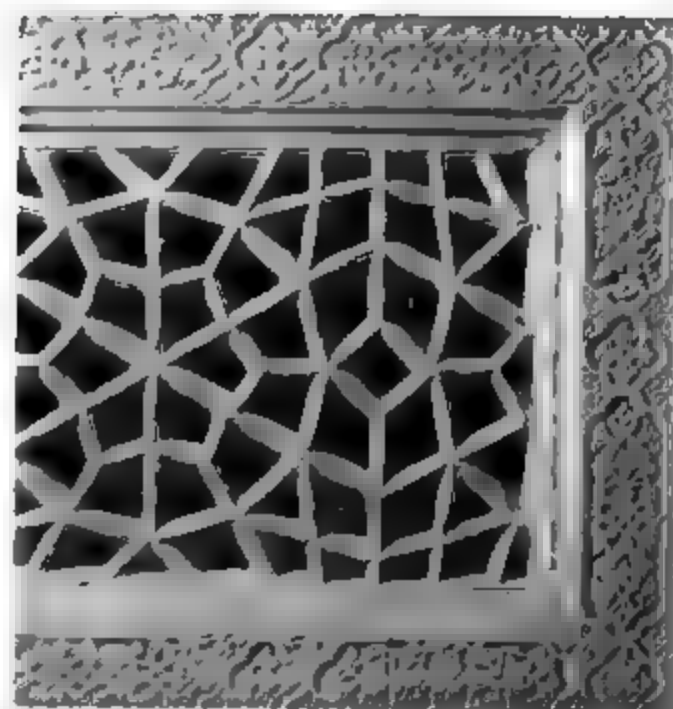
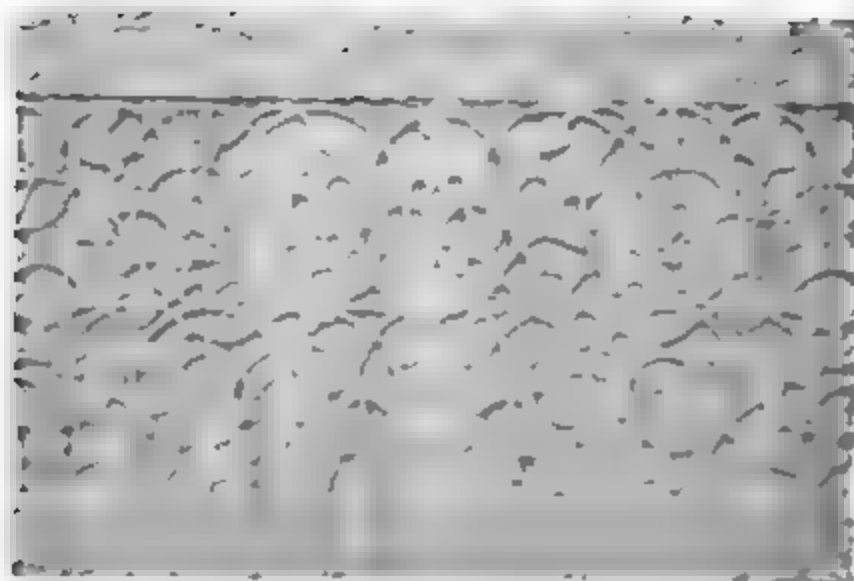


Fig. 72 (left)

Carved decoration on the "throne" at
the Gur-i Amir (detail)
Samarqand, c. 1400-1430
Stone

Fig. 73 (above)

Carved railing from the Gur-i Amir
(detail)
Samarqand, c. 1404
Marble

Fig. 71

Foundation inscription in kufic script
from a minaret of the *masjid-i jami'* of
Gawharshad
Herat, dated A.H. 839 (A.D. 1435-36)
Stone

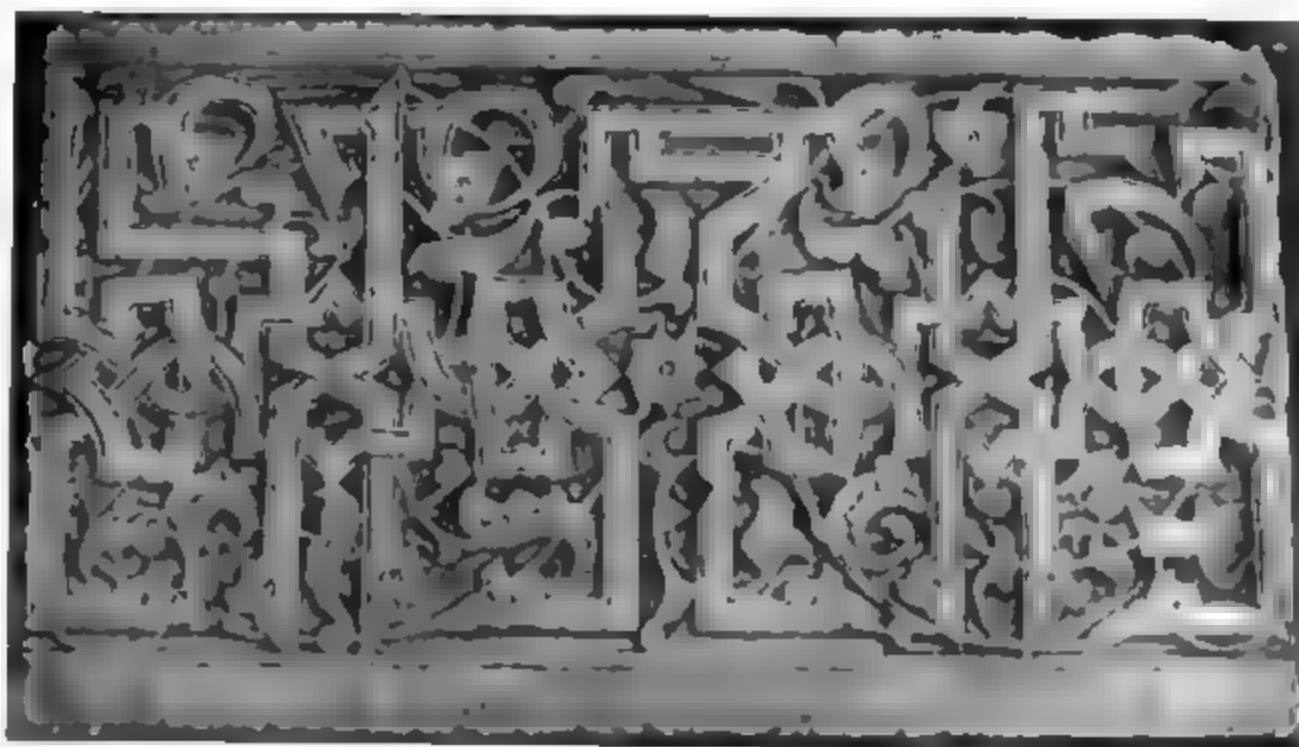


Fig. 74

Tombstone found at the mausoleum of
Jahangir ibn Timur (Hazrat Imam)
(detail)
Shahr-i Sabz, c. 1400-1430
Stone





cat. no. 111b

Tile
Iran, dated A.H. 860 (A.D. 1455)
Molded relief ceramic with luster-
painted decoration

a greater architectural surface area than ever before in the eastern Islamic world. In the absence of abundant sources of wood and building stone, tile decoration was used to assert the dynasty's presence in Transoxiana and Khurasan.⁴⁴ The intricate, dazzling sheets of polychrome glazed tile that animated Timurid structures during the fifteenth century were the result of increasing refinement in taste that led to a restricted number of decorative themes. This evolution can be clearly traced at the Shah-i Zinda, a veritable lexicon of late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century tile work, where nearly all early Timurid innovations and adaptations in the medium can be found (fig. 76). Throughout Timurid lands an enormous variety of techniques was employed. In addition to individual tiles that were carved in glazed terra-cotta, underglaze and overglaze painted, executed in the *cuerda seca* technique, or simply fired in deep, translucent monochrome or polychrome glazes,⁴⁵ one also finds survivals of much earlier techniques, such as luster tile used for the 1455 building inscription of the Timurid Sultan Abu-Sa'id (cat. no. 113A–B).

Dominating the decoration of Timurid structures, however, were two forms of tilework whose breathtak-



fig. 76

Decoration from the facade of the tomb of Shirin Bika Agha (d. 1385/6), sister of Timur, at Shah-i Zinda Samarkand, c. 1400
Tile mosaic

cat. no. 113A

Tiles
Iran, dated A.H. 860 (A.D. 1455)
Molded relief ceramic with luster painted decoration



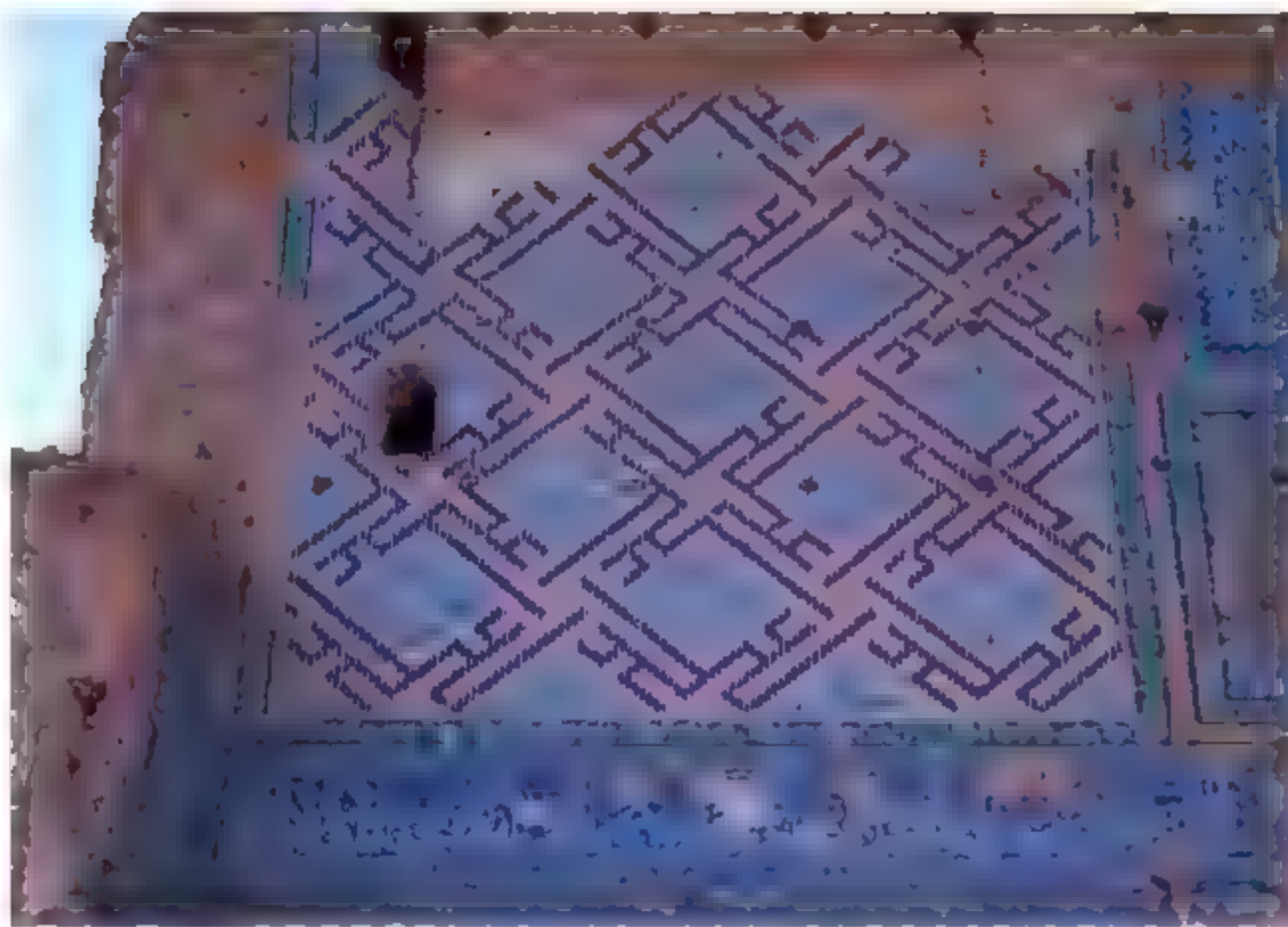


fig. 77

Entrance portal at Aq Saray (detail)
Shaher-i Saba, c. 1379–96

ing visual properties would never again be equaled: tile mosaic and *banna'i* (builder's technique). Once a standard repertory for each was established, experimentation was replaced by an increasing elegance and sophistication responsible for arguably the most brilliant and dynamic phase of architectural decoration in the history of art. This was particularly true of tile mosaic, a patterned arrangement of individually cut tiles in different colors used to cloak buildings. Already highly developed by the Timurid period,⁴⁶ the technique lent itself to precise, refined, clearly articulated designs, and the dynasty's patronage exploited these qualities to produce ever more complex decorative programs. Many of these inscriptions and designs, such as the vertical arabesque or the flowering vase,⁴⁷ were undoubtedly provided by the kitabkhana, which also may have dictated the prevailing color scheme: elements of green, black, light blue, white, and amber brown laid against a dark blue ground (fig. 76). The technique was used to great advantage for inscriptions—stately progressions of gleaming white *thuluth* script over deep blue—that glowed against buff-colored brick surfaces with a riveting intensity (cat. no. 8).

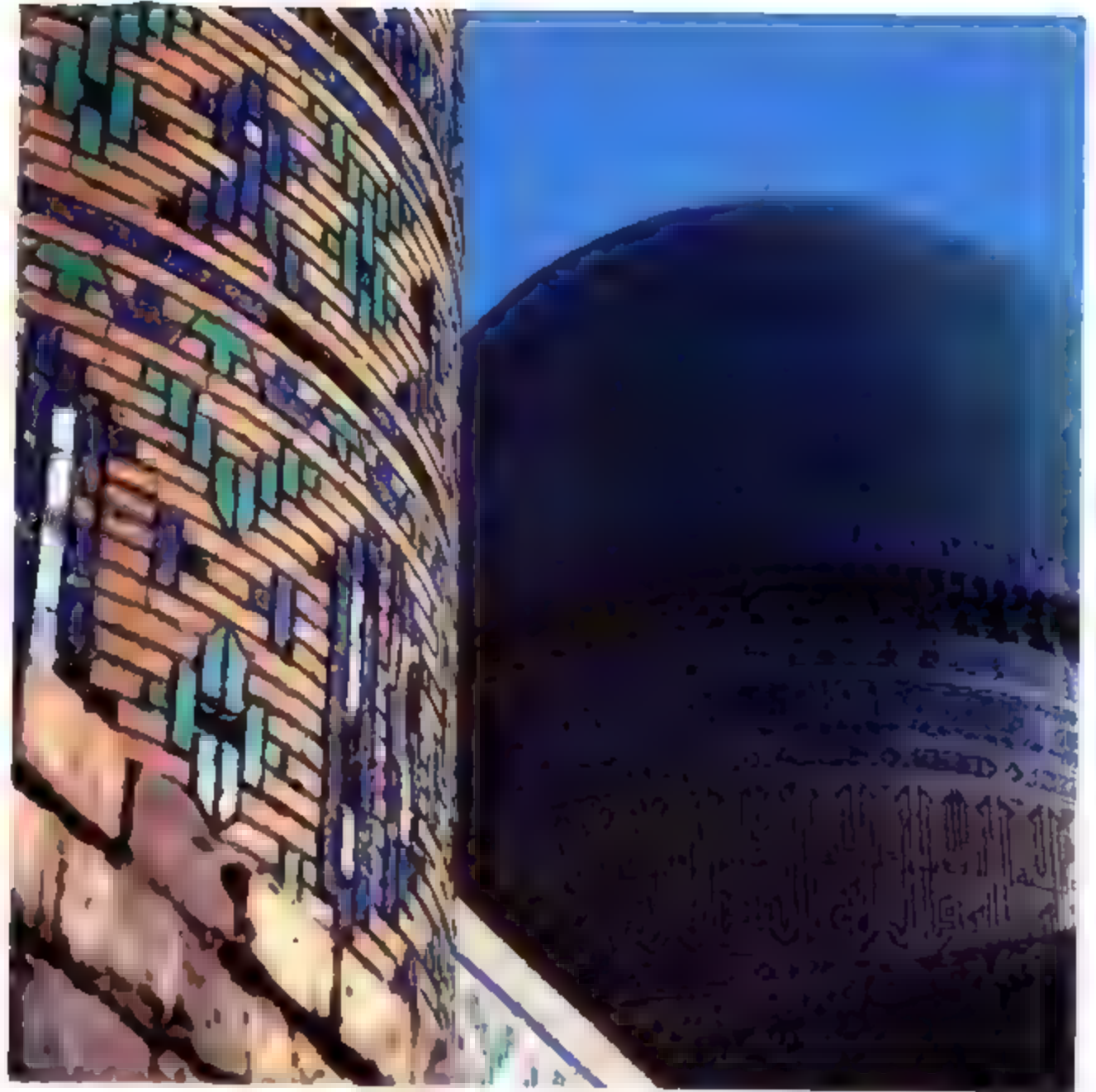
Such finesse and intricacy were not concerns of *banna'i* (fig. 77), which featured glazed brick ends—

white, turquoise, dark blue—laid in geometric patterns. This technique distinguishes the early Timurid monuments of Samarkand and the Shrine of Ahmad Yasavi (fig. 78).⁴⁸ Bold and massive in effect, it often appears as repeating patterns of gigantic size that crisscross architectural surfaces like webbing, creating dramatic series of interlocking contrasts between glazed and unglazed bricks. Even more impressive were the enormous inscriptions in this technique, almost always pious in content, found on flat surfaces as well as the drums of domes; favored scripts were a square *kufic* and a rather angular *naskh*, their vibrant shafts visible for miles (fig. 79).

A curious feature of these decorative programs in both tile mosaic and *banna'i* is the consistent absence of a progression toward a decorative climax.⁴⁹ The Timurids publicly proclaimed their ideological commitments and aspirations by these highly organized and spectacular decorative means. Yet the impact on the viewer was private and nonspecific rather than suggestive of any distinct sense of movement toward a focal point;⁵⁰ decoration was for the most part nondirectional. These sheathing devices created new ambient environments, and the effect was abstract and transcendental.

fig. 79

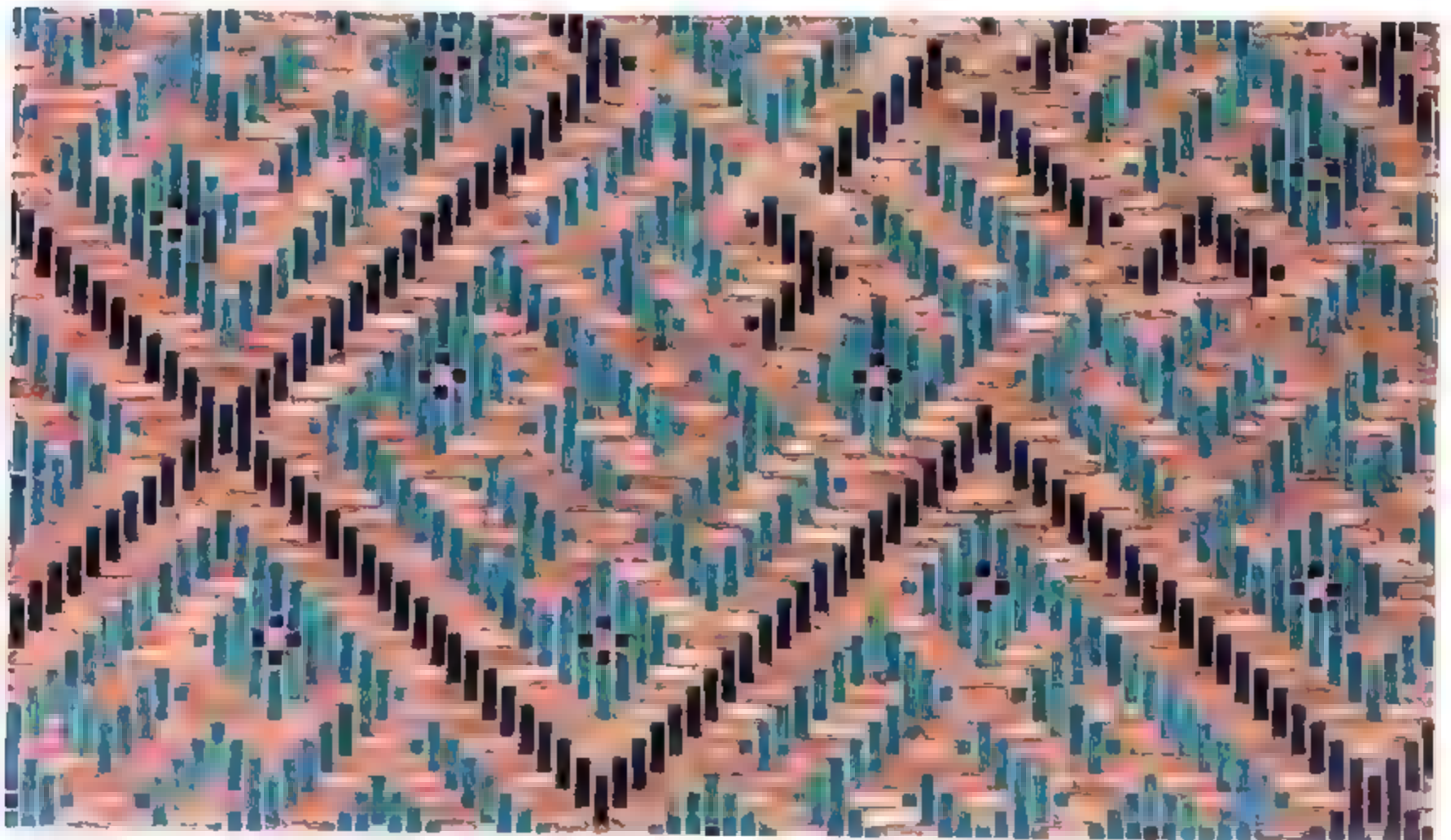
Main dome and drum of the *masjid-i jami* of Timur
Samarqand, c. 1398–1405



215

fig. 78

Wall of the Shrine of Ahmad Yasavi
(detail)
Turkistan, c. 1197

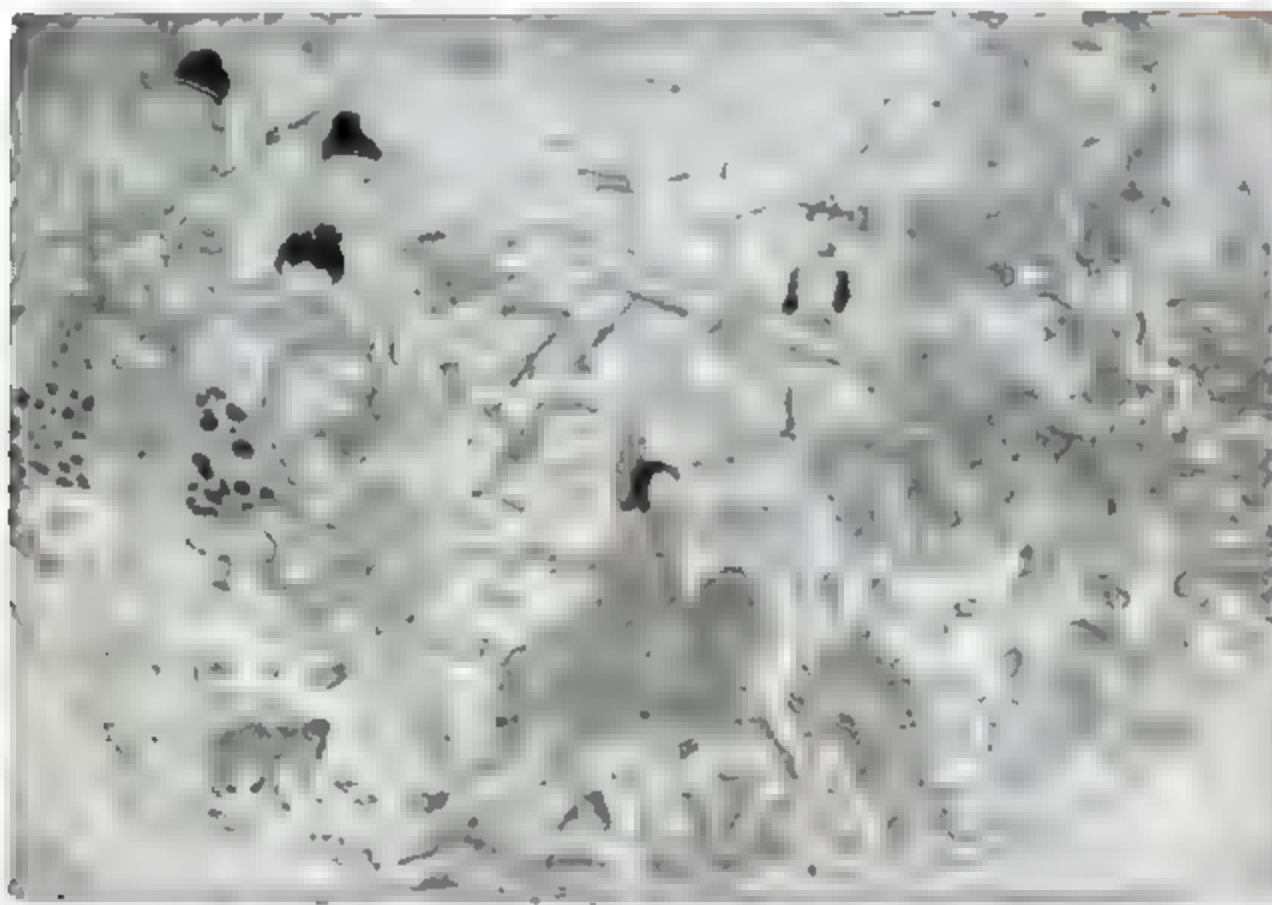


Architectural decoration in many respects appears to have been made deliberately analogous to textiles in Timurid art. Woven fabric in Islam was traditionally an equally receptive medium for a dynasty's aesthetic and social aspirations, and the kitabkhana's exploitation of Persian and Chinese traditions of textile excellence not only endowed the inherent sensual qualities of luxury cloth with typical Timurid grace but also made startling new use of its visual properties. Only a few fragments of Timurid textile work have survived, but painting and textual sources provide plentiful evidence of the transforming effect tents, carpets, and hangings had on royal life.

Perhaps no effect was more fantastic than the frequent duplication in decorated cloth of permanent architectural forms such as walls, domes, and pavilions. These ephemeral, elaborately staged settings, fashioned for court ceremony and festivities, were further heightened by royal participation. Visual and historical accounts document that individuals' physical positions in ceremonies as well as their appearance—stance, cosmetics, and, above all, costume—were integral components of these tableaux in which, as Ibn Arabshah remarked, "roughness and wildness were exchanged for charm and beauty."¹¹ Elegant, flowerlike



cat. no. 116
Cloud collar
Iran, c. 1400–1450



cat. no. 114
Design for a cloud collar
Iran, c. 1450–1500



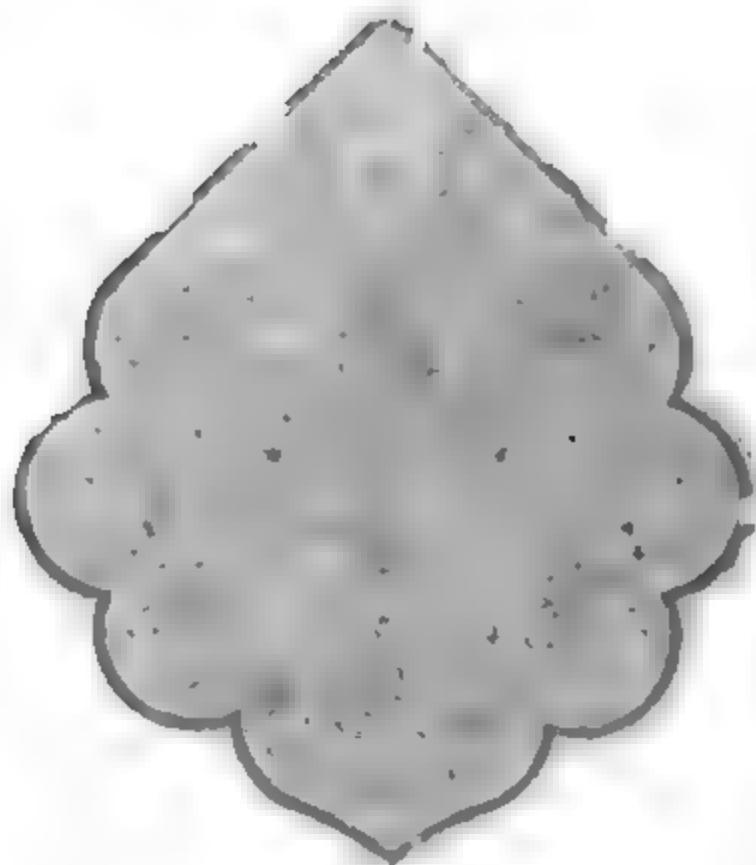
cat. no. 116 detail

youths, moon-faced beauties cloaked in glittering silks, embroidered walls, rich carpets, buildings constructed of cloth or covered with blazing tiles—all helped create a shimmering world that surrounded the dynasty with a theatrical vision affirming its greatness.

On the basis of surviving pre- and post-Timurid examples, it can be assumed that a large number of techniques and fabrics were employed in cities like Samarqand.⁵² Paintings show that colored silks decorated with small-scale motifs in gold embroidery were favored for costume. Clavijo describes such a garment in his description of Pir-Muhammad: “This young prince was as we noticed very sumptuously attired; as is the Tartar custom, he was wearing a robe of blue [Chinese] Zaytuni silk embroidered in gold circles, like small wheels, which back and front covered his chest and shoulders and passed down the material of the sleeves.”⁵³

The designs used in royal textiles originated for the most part in the kitabkhana and reflect the influence of

Chinese artistic ideas. The patterns and motifs prevalent in the arts of the book, particularly those of Chinese inspiration, were easily transferred to cloth (cat. nos. 114–15). Both Ming and Timurid histories document the desirability of Chinese silk for court use, and its arrival as “diplomatic gifts” is recorded at the cities of Samarqand, Herat, Isfahan, and Shiraz.⁵⁴ Luxury cloth from Ottoman Turkey, India, and even Europe was also known at court,⁵⁵ but none competed in royal Timurid textile production with the overwhelming impact of Chinese decorative motifs. The embroidered silk cloud collar (cat. no. 116), now in the State Armory of the Kremlin, shows how those motifs and forms were adapted for Timurid use. Of superb technical quality, the decoration, consisting of eight pairs of angels against a leafy arabesque, recalls numerous elements of early Timurid manuscripts produced at Shiraz and Herat: volumetric split palmettes, hybrid lotus leaves, trailing ribbons, and characteristic Timurid headgear ranging from pentagonal-brimmed



cat. no. 119

Cloud lozenge point with fantastic plant
Iran, c. 1400-1450

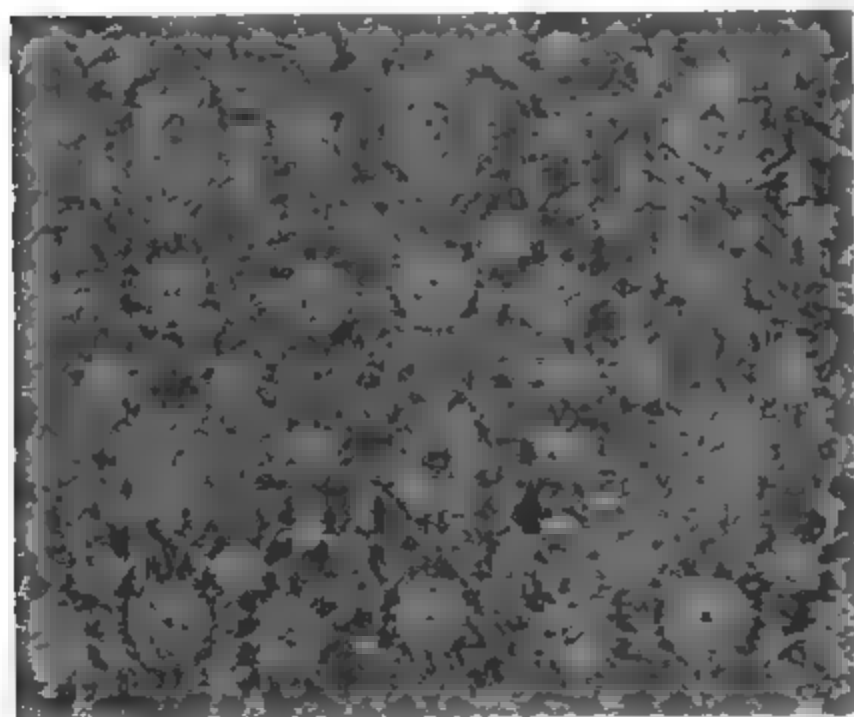


fig. 81

Textile fragment
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1450
Silk damask
66.7 x 21 cm (26 1/4 x 8 3/4 in.)
Washington, D.C., The Textile
Museum, acquired by George Hewitt
Myers in 1954. 3.214



cat. no. 49

Lining of the carved wooden box of
Ulugh-Beg ibn Shahrukh
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1420-49
Silk

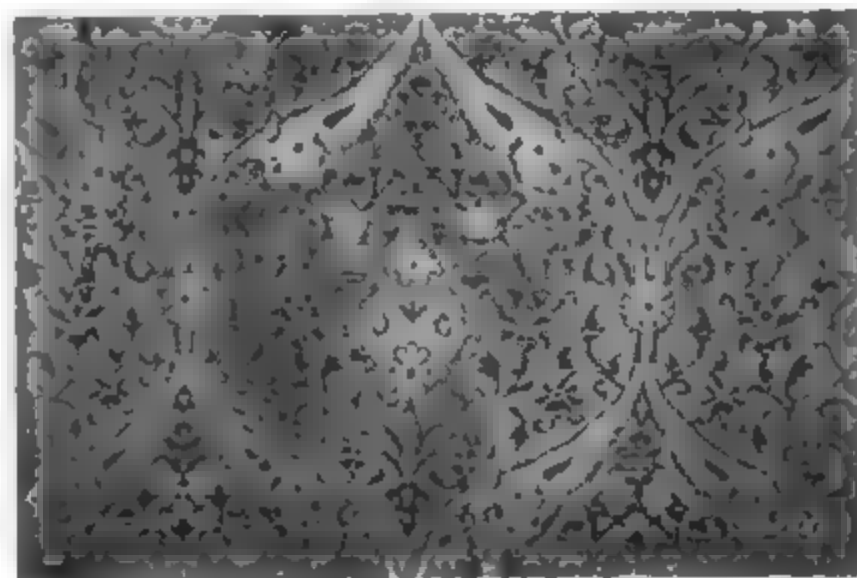
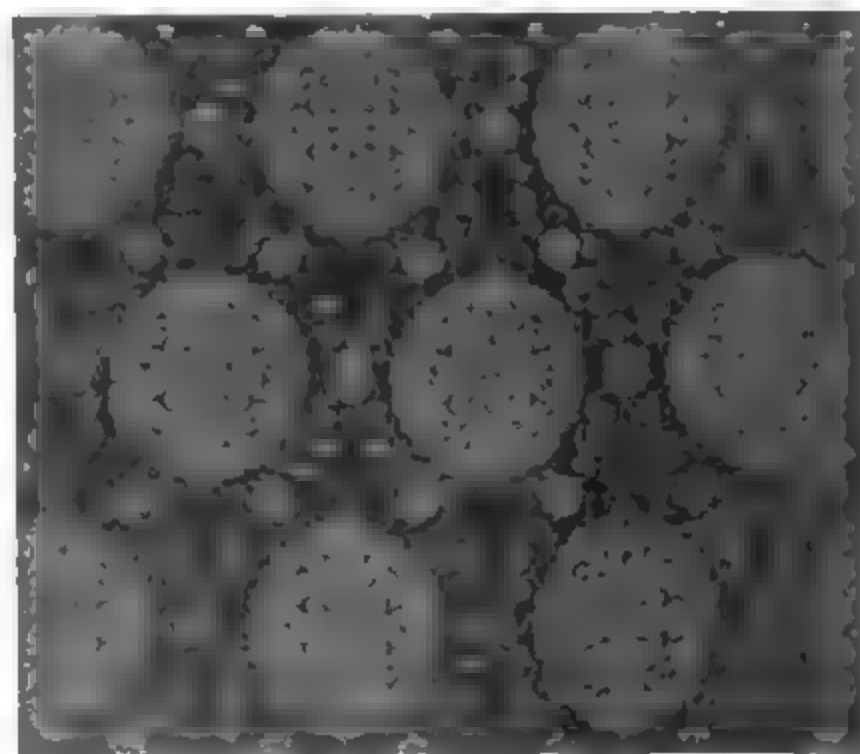


fig. 80

Textile fragment
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1400-1450
Silk
63.1 x 14.5 cm (24 7/8 x 5 3/4 in.)
Leningrad, State Hermitage, 1171



cat. no. 117

Textile fragment
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1450-1500

hats to leafy caps. Lithe, graceful leaf forms are also found in other fragments (cat. no. 117, figs. 80–81), including one piece lining the interior of Ulugh-Beg's box (cat. no. 49), yet these meager remains provide only tantalizing hints of how the dynasty used the vast textile resources at its disposal.⁵⁶

The distinctive theatrical bent of Timurid aesthetics was given unfettered expression in the production and decoration of hangings, cloth enclosures,⁵⁷ and above all royal tents, none of which are known to have survived (cat. no. 32, f. 111b). While tents were a traditional nomadic means of displaying wealth and status, Clavijo's and Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi's eyewitness accounts of Timur's tents are replete with architectural rather than steppe associations. Their complexity, scale, extravagant decoration, and materials represented the handiwork of craftsmen from urban traditions and reflected the convergence under the Timurids of the princely tent tradition of the Middle East with that of Turco-Mongol Central Asia.⁵⁸ Allusions to permanent building forms were deliberate and stunningly effective—Clavijo compared one “pavilion” erected for Timur with a castle seen from a distance—and the proximity of these great cloth structures to one another in large encampments must have evoked an urban context.⁵⁹

The role played by members of the kitabkhana in the production of these princely tents is noted by the *arzadasht*, which mentions that an artist, Khwaja Abdul-Rahim, provided designs for tentmakers. It also offers a brief description of a single large trellis tent, lavishly decorated in appliqué and embroidery (see Appendix 1). The vocabulary used for the description of this decoration corresponds exactly to the wording used earlier in the report to describe the production of manuscripts.⁶⁰ Further evidence of the kitabkhana's role in tent making is found in the Diez album, which contains a pounced workshop design possibly intended as a model for a tent panel; its arabesque decoration is consistent with that used in books (cat. no. 118).



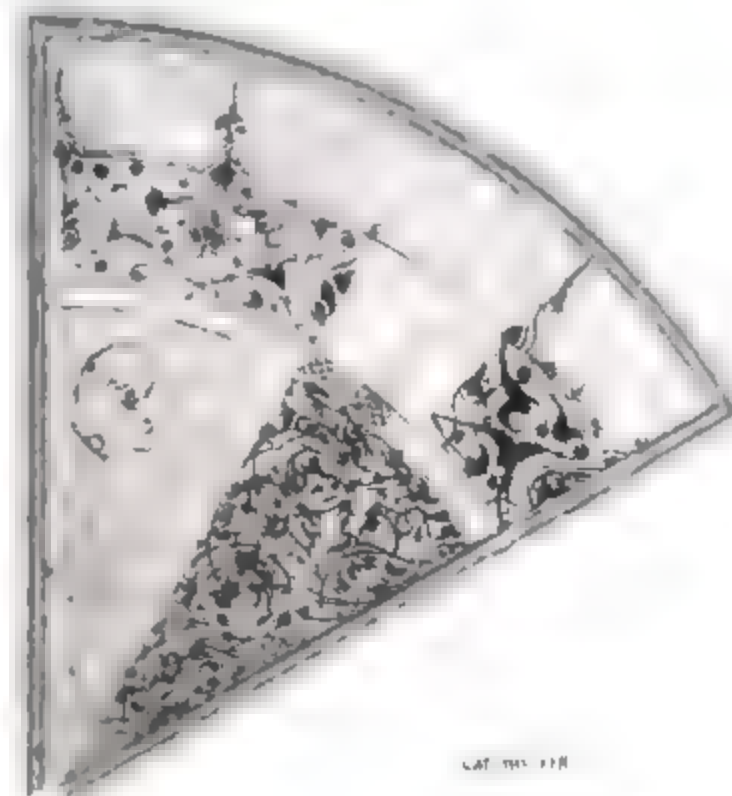
cat. no. 32

“Majnun at the Ka’ba” (detail)

From a *Khamsa* of Nizami

Herat, dated A.H. 849 (A.D. 1445–46)

f. 111b



cat. no. 118

Design panel

Herat(?), fifteenth century

cat. no. 147 (below)

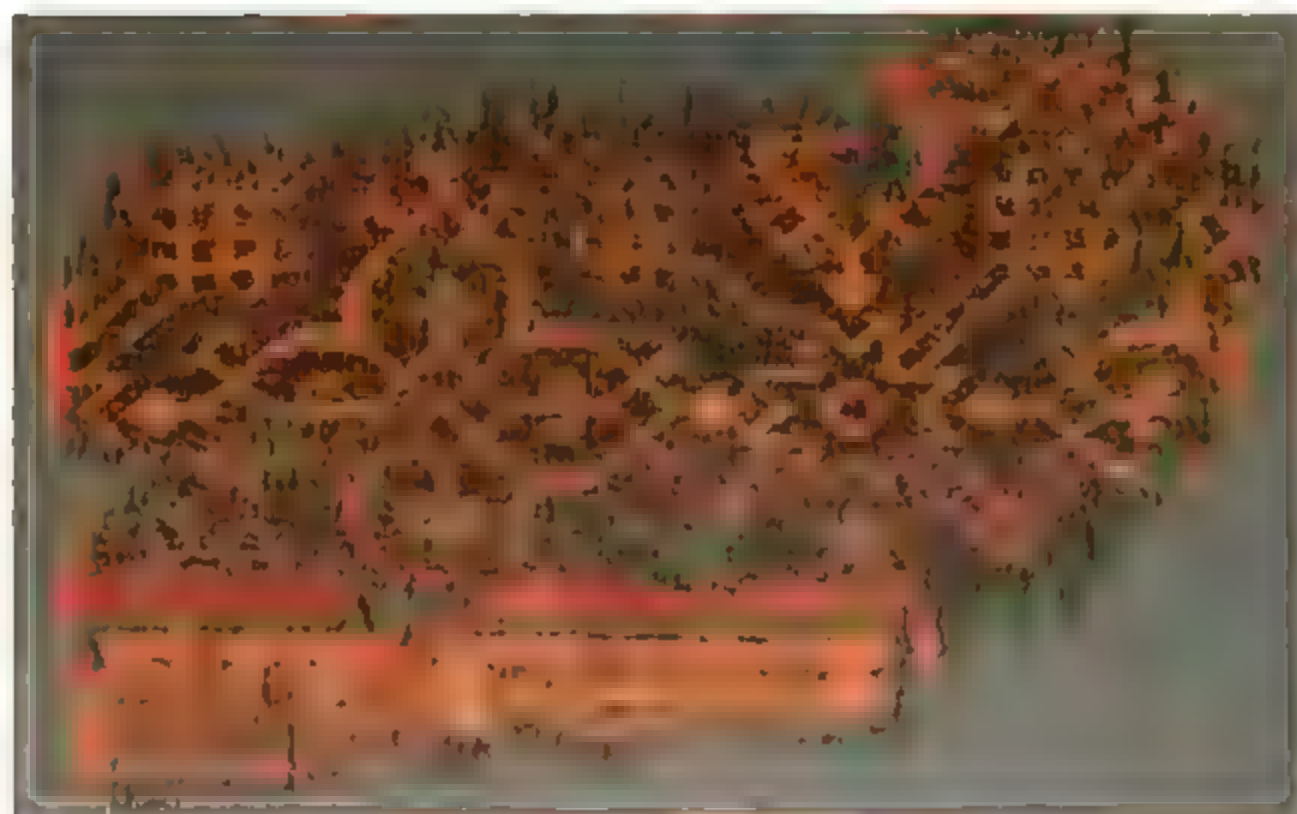
"Timur Granting an Audience in Balkh
on the Occasion of His Accession to
Power in April 1370" (detail)
From a *Zafarnama* of Sharafuddin
Ali Yazdi
Herat (?), dated A.H. 872 (A.D. 1467-68)
ff. 82b-83a

fig. 82 (right)

"Humay in the Palace of the Fairies"
detail
From a *Humay-ni Humayun* copied for
Baysunghur ibn Shahrub
Herat, dated A.H. 811 (A.D. 1417-18)
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
29 x 14 5/8 in. (74 x 37.6 cm)
Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, N.1.182,
f. 10b



The kitabkhana was also involved in the design of royal carpets. Evidence from painting shows two dominant groups of Timurid carpets: an earlier geometric tradition, featuring inner fields with small repeating patterns edged with kufic-inspired borders (fig. 82), and later arabesque carpets, their designs featuring variations of circles and cartouches edged with arabesques (cat. no. 147).⁶¹ These later fifteenth-century arabesque examples have affinities with kitabkhana efforts in book illumination and would serve as the basis of the spectacular Safavid carpet tradition, but the same cannot be said of the geometric examples, whose vigorous, knotted forms may represent an older nomadic strain, one stubbornly resistant to the aestheticism of court art.



cat. no. 149

Carpet fragment
Iran or Central Asia, fifteenth century

Despite their ubiquity in contemporary painting, there are no generally recognized surviving Timurid carpets.⁶³ The painted depictions of these geometric carpets, however, show remarkable similarities to the “small-pattern Holbein carpets” (as well as the related Damascus, or so-called Para Mamluk, carpets). Said to be from Ottoman Asia Minor, these small-pattern Holbein examples were especially favored in western Europe and are found in paintings there from the 1450s.⁶⁴ Little is known of the origin of their design or the provenance of the carpets, but the patterns and colors often reflect Timurid taste and designs. Since current research suggests that many small-pattern Holbein carpets can now be dated to the fifteenth rather than sixteenth century,⁶⁵ some of the roughly fifty surviving intact or fragmentary examples may be Timurid. While past research has emphasized knotting technique to demonstrate provenance, carpet weavers captured during Timurid campaigns would have continued to weave in the technique in which they were trained. One fragment, now preserved in the Benaki Museum in Athens, is remarkably close in its inner field design to representations in Timurid paintings (cat. no. 119), suggesting that other examples may eventually surface that can also be identified as fifteenth-century Timurid work.⁶⁶

One of the great strengths of the kitabkhana system as practiced under the Timurids was its ability to absorb and codify earlier traditions. This elasticity is particularly evident in the dynasty’s use of ornamental stones, such as jade, which when executed within the decorative category reflected traditional pre-Timurid conventions as well as contemporary taste.

For later generations in the eastern Islamic world the Timurids’ association with painting was rivaled only by the dynasty’s affiliation with ornamental stones. Timurid connoisseurship in gems was established from the beginning of the dynasty. Their eastern lands and the frontier areas bordering them were rich in many of these precious substances, a fact recognized not only by the Islamic world but in China as well.⁶⁷ Both precious and semiprecious stones, including rubies, emeralds, sapphires, pearls, and turquoise, were prominent at Timur’s court, many undoubtedly gifts—the Chinese emperor is recorded as having sent precious stones⁶⁸—or booty from campaigns. They were used by Timurid artisans to ornament everything

from costumes, tents, and tableware to royal exotica. Clavijo, for example, describes a gold tree at Samarqand, as tall as a man, whose branches held gems and enamel birds.⁶⁹ Aside from their ornamental use, these stones were often inscribed with a prince’s name and prized as objects in their own right by the Timurids and their descendants.⁷⁰

The hardstone that was most consistently linked with the Timurids was jade (*yashm*). The stone was symbolic of their Turkic Central Asian heritage and the earliest extant Islamic jades are attributed to the dynasty.⁷¹ While jade is often associated with China, its primary source in Asia was the Kunlun mountains near Khotan in Central Asia. By Timur’s reign this area had been both Muslim and Turkic in population for centuries, and there is evidence of indigenous Central Asian jade carving. Records show that carved jade objects were sent from this region as gifts to the Chinese court from the tenth century B.C. until the ninth century A.D.⁷² In the tenth-century writings of al-Biruni, the earliest surviving Islamic source to mention jade, the stone is connected with the Turks who inhabited the lands between Iran and China.⁷³

Turkic groups in this region frequently attributed talismanic powers to jade and other stones. According to a legend recounted by Abdul-Razzaq Samarqandi, sorcerers in 1451 aided Uzbek troops allied with the Timurid prince Abu-Sa’id by using a stone known as *yada* to produce cold, snow, and rain during a hot season passage across the waterless Hunger Steppe.⁷⁴ This *yada* stone may have been jade, which was also thought to detect poison, cure eye and stomach ailments, and offer protection against lightning and earthquakes.⁷⁵ Al-Biruni offers another reason for the esteem jade held among Turks: “It is said that jade or one variety of it is called the victory stone and for this reason the Turks decorated their swords, saddles, and belts with it, desirous of gaining victory over their contestants and opponents. Others emulate them in this respect by fashioning from it seals and knife handles.”⁷⁶

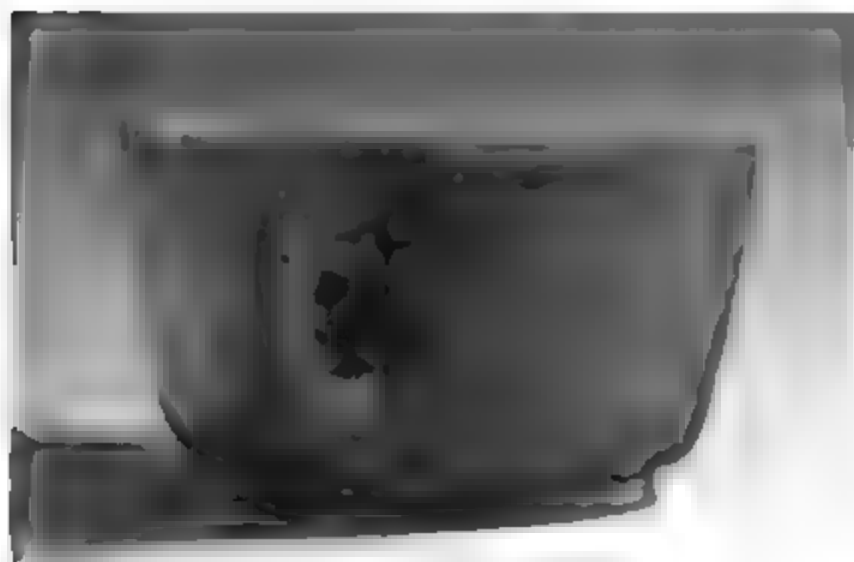
Most Timurid carved jades are usually discussed in the context of Ulugh-Beg’s reign at Samarqand. This association is partially a result of his greater proximity to jade sources, but the prince’s particular interest in the stone can also be attributed to his pronounced Chingizid leanings. It is not known whether jade had Mongol dynastic connotations, but it was tied more

closely to Turco-Mongol rather than Islamic tradition; Ulugh-Beg chose jade for the tombstone on his grandfather's resting place, an object which reaffirmed the prince's contrived royal Mongol lineage.

121

By the Timurid period carved jade was probably more widely circulated than ever before among Turco-Mongol peoples of Central and West Asia, and some of the forms produced by the Timurids have Mongol overtones. Dragon-handled jade vessels are characteristic of Timurid taste (cat. nos. 52, 120); perhaps used as wine cups, their shapes have been traced to Golden Horde metal vessels intended for koumiss, a fermented mare's milk much revered among the Mongols.⁷⁶ While not all Timurid jade vessels necessarily derived from metal prototypes like these, they were often closely related as evidenced by the parallels between Timurid sword quillons in jade (cat. nos. 51, 121) and fifteenth-century metal candlesticks like the one now preserved in Copenhagen (cat. no. 122).

The Timurids' use of jade was influenced not only by their own heritage but by contact with China. Historically there have been no more voracious users of jade than the Chinese, whose long attribution to the stone of aesthetic and amuletic qualities continued under Mongol Yuan rule. One of the wonders of that court was a black jade wine bowl, still preserved in



cat. no. 120

Typical cup
Iran or Central Asia, fifteenth century



cat. no. 121

Saber with dragon-headed hilt and
scabbard
Iran or Central Asia, fifteenth century



cat. no. 122

Dragon-headed candlestick
Iran or Central Asia, fifteenth century

Beijing; of enormous size—four feet, six inches across at the rim—it is decorated with waves and dragons.⁷⁷ Timur and his early descendants may have known of this object through Mongol histories and legends that circulated at their courts, and it may have contributed to their interest in the stone.

In relations between China and the Timurids jade was an important trade item, and from the early years of Ming rule the jade-producing areas were under at least the nominal control of the Timurids; even the *Zafarnama* (The book of conquest) mentions the jade-producing rivers near Khotan.⁷⁸ Chinese annals record a number of embassies bearing jade arriving from

Khotan, Mughulistan, and Khurasan during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, while the Ming emperor included jade vessels among gifts sent to Ulugh-Beg in 1445.⁷⁹

As a lapidary art jade work was almost entirely advanced within the Chinese tradition. The Timurids' recognition of that fact can be detected in the *kitab-khana*, as evidenced by an openwork chinoiserie jade plaque surrounded by Persian verses, whose central field recalls numerous designs from the albums (cat. no. 123).

This allure of Chinese luxury objects made a taste for jade carved in the Chinese fashion inevitable,

FIG. 45
Jade oval "cup"
China, c. 1426–55



Cat. no. 125

Jug
China, c. 1426–55

Cat. no. 126

Plaque
Iran or Central Asia, fifteenth century



whether the jades were produced in China as gifts or executed in Timurid workshops. Accordingly, there is considerable debate over the origin of certain pieces, such as a jade oval "cup" inscribed with the name of Ulugh Beg (cat. no. 124). It follows Chinese models in both form and concept, its original Chinese function not that of a cup but a *cheng* (water reservoir) used to grind ink in a scholar's study. The distinctive feline handle repeats a convention known from as early as the Song period (960–1279). A Chinese jade water reservoir that somewhat resembles this example was found in a Yuan-period tomb dated 1320.⁶⁰ Some scholars even suggest that the famed white jade jug with Ulugh-Beg's name and titles was a Chinese gift to the prince (fig. 46), particularly in light of the frequent exchange of embassies between Samarqand and the Ming emperor, who sought to facilitate Chinese access to jade sources. Its form, based on a non-Chinese metalwork shape, is also seen in Ming blue-and-white porcelain (cat. no. 125). This shape along with the fine carving and white color—the jade most prized by the Chinese and associated with southern China during the Ming period⁶¹—has for many implied Chinese workmanship. Chinese annals, however, record that from as early as the eighth century objects carved in white jade had arrived at the Chinese court from Samarqand.⁶² The jug's closest parallels are actually found in other Timurid jades (cat. no. 126) and in the series of later Timurid metal jugs, earlier examples or prototypes of which must have inspired the Ming ceramic imitations. The jug's Chinese associations are probably secondary, and it most likely is of Timurid origin, as the superb quality of its inscription would suggest.

Other jades associated with Timurid patronage conformed more closely to non-Chinese or Islamic models, reflecting once again the dynasty's pluralistic outlook. A small, unusual white jade casket (cat. no. 50) made for Ala'uddawla has a form likely based on a gold or silver Islamic model. Royal seals in jade and other hardstones, with the names and titles of their owners in Arabic script, apparently constitute the only surviving objects attributable to the early Timurid royal figures Miranshah and Gawharshad (cat. nos. 127–28). The desirability of hardstones for Timurid princes is further demonstrated by a small, richly colored agate cup inscribed with the name of the last Timurid ruler of Herat, Sultan-Husayn Mirza, and dated 1471–72 (cat. no. 150, ill. p. 272);⁴³ its traditional Islamic decoration below the rim consists of cartouches enclosing verse and quatrefoils containing plant forms.⁴⁴ A somewhat similar but more elegant late fifteenth-century example in jade is also known, distinguished by its gently flaring rim and loops of floral scrolls bearing lotus blossoms and fan-shaped leaves, a scheme frequently seen in the



cat. no. 127 (above)

Seal of Miranshah ibn Timur
Iran, before 1408



cat. no. 128 (right)

Seal of Gawharshad bint Ghiyathuddin
Tarkhan
Herat(?), before 1457

cat. no. 126

Jug
Iran or Central Asia, fifteenth century



albums (cat. no. 129).⁸⁵ In these and other cases the kitabkhana easily transferred the themes of the decorative category to jade.

Enormous material wealth in combination with personal vanity and the insistent dictates of a royal aesthetic assured the presence of luxury tableware at Timurid courts. These objects, while intended for daily use, were nonetheless important elements in the dynasty's assimilation of the trappings of a sophisticated court life. Consequently tableware was subject to the ubiquitous reach of the kitabkhana and those influences that affected its program of artistic production.

Most Timurid tableware appears to have been of precious metal or ceramic, though vessels of certain materials such as hardstones may have been reserved for specialized activities like wine drinking. Clavijo's account notes a wide range of gold and silver objects at court, frequently jewel encrusted, but none of these has survived;⁸⁶ no piece of Timurid metalwork, in fact, can be attributed with certainty to a royal patron of the first half of the fifteenth century.⁸⁷ Only through representations of court scenes in painting is some idea of their variety of form preserved.

Timurid painting is also the primary source of information about the dynasty's use of ceramic wares, but it does not reveal whether ceramic vessels, predomi-

cat. no. 129

Bowl

Iran or Central Asia, c. 1450-1500





nantly blue-and-white in decoration, are of Chinese manufacture or are Timurid imitations, an issue central to the role of ceramics at court.⁸⁸ Surviving Timurid-period ceramic vessels from Iran and Central Asia stand in stark contrast to other artistic traditions practiced for the court, particularly the related tile tradition. Local ceramic production did not cease under Timurid rule, though the evidence of its extent and nature is far from clear. Clavijo mentions that ceramists, along with glassmakers, from Damascus were carried to Samarkand by Timur, but no significant trace of their influence is apparent.⁸⁹ The small corpus of fifteenth-century pottery thus far assembled includes pieces that are for the most part coarse and heavy with thick glazes—usually clear but also in blue and green—over designs painted in cobalt blue and black (fig. 83). Only a few pieces have known dates and locations of origin: a spittoon (1444) and a plate (1473), for example, both from Mashhad (fig. 84).⁹⁰ Literary sources also testify to the production of glazed ceramics in Herat and possibly Kirman.⁹¹ Still, it seems unlikely that any of this production was instigated by royal patronage.

It is difficult to imagine any of these local ceramics as kindred to the other superbly crafted works with which the Timurid elite customarily surrounded themselves. There are, however, a few surviving examples of finer quality, marked by clear glazes and thin bodies, which show varying degrees of influence from the kitabkhana (cat. no. 130). The workshop's role generally would have consisted of supplying designs to potters,⁹² and a few extant pieces of Timurid-period ceramic ware carry motifs associated with the kitabkhana, usually of Chinese inspiration (fig. 85). One group of thin-bodied, small white bowls with blue or black decoration found in both Iran and Central Asia (cat. no. 131), features an elongated dragon of the type seen in the albums and on a variety of other royal

fig. 83

Iran, fifteenth century
Underglaze-painted ceramic
Diameter 33.4 cm (12 3/4 in.)
New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Mr. and Mrs. Isaac D. Fletcher Collection, bequest of Isaac D. Fletcher, 1917, 17 (120.70)

fig. 84

Mashhad, dated A.H. 878 (A.D. 1473)
Underglaze-painted ceramic
Diameter 35.2 cm (13 7/8 in.)
Leningrad, State Hermitage, VG-2650



fig. 85

Ceramic fragment
Iran or Central Asia, fifteenth century
Underglaze-painted ceramic
Diameter 25 cm (9 7/8 in.)
Leningrad, State Hermitage, VG-717



cat. no. 110

Bowl
Iran or Central Asia, fifteenth century



cat. no. 112

Bowl
China, c. 1420–35

objects.⁹¹ An even more direct link is demonstrated by an important small fragment in the Hermitage (fig. 86). Finely drawn in red pigment and gold, it shows a waterfowl amidst swirling currents, a scene closely related to examples in Timurid manuscripts and drawings (cat. no. 108) done for Iskandar-Sultan earlier in the century.

The nature and relatively inferior quality of most local ceramic remains, however, suggests the almost inevitable conclusion that ceramic ware at Timurid courts was usually Chinese blue-and-white porcelain (cat. no. 132). Its superior properties of thinness, purity, and resonance were recognized by Muslim sources as early as the ninth century. Nasiruddin Tusi, writing in the mid-thirteenth century under the patronage of Hulagu, praised its special qualities. Citing both medicinal and hygienic attributes, he states that porcelain sweated when brought into contact with poison, a trait not claimed by the Chinese; this quality, similarly ascribed to jade, would only add to porcelain's suitability as court ware for the Timurids.⁹⁴

While there is now general agreement that the origins of Chinese porcelain decorated with cobalt blue predate the Yuan dynasty, it was from the early fourteenth century that these wares achieved prominence in both China and the Islamic world. From its very incep-

tion it was integrally connected with the trade between the two areas, and the cobalt used by Chinese potters arrived from Muslim lands. Other inspirations from Islamic sources are apparent in some Yuan blue-and-white types; connections with Islamic metalwork and luster ceramics have been frequently noted, as has the preference in some pieces for geometric and nonrepresentational decoration.⁹⁵

Although Chinese celadons were found in Iranian markets during the fifteenth century, the Timurids were clearly most fascinated with blue-and-white porcelain, and they had ready access to it. Clavijo noted its use at Timur's court.⁹⁶ The Tughluq palace at Delhi, plundered and destroyed by Timur during his Indian campaign in 1398, may have provided the warlord with a sizable collection of Yuan blue-and-white;⁹⁷ only fragments of the collection remain today, but it is conceivable that portions of it were transported back to Samarqand. Chinese embassies arriving at Timurid courts were another source.⁹⁸ The majority of these vessels, however, were probably acquired by trade along the major Central Asian land routes, which both Samarqand and Mashhad straddled.⁹⁹

The size of Timurid porcelain holdings is mostly a matter of conjecture, as are their former locations and owners. Ulugh-Beg, again perhaps because of Samarqand's position on the major land route, figures prominently in the few Timurid notices on Chinese porcelain. In his garden outside Samarqand he constructed a four-doored hall, the Chinikhana (Porcelain House), and Babur states that he sent to China for the porcelain used in it.¹⁰⁰ Today some of the largest and most important assemblages of Yuan and early Ming blue-and-white wares are preserved in Islamic lands:



Fig. 85

Iran or Central Asia, fifteenth century

the enormous Ottoman collection at the Topkapı Sarayı Palace and the smaller Safavid collection given by Shah Abbas in 1611 to the shrine at Ardabil and now mainly held in Tehran.¹⁰¹ Remnants of Timurid pieces probably survive among the Ardabil and Topkapı groups; the Safavids likely appropriated Timurid porcelains with the conquest of Herat in 1510, while the Ottomans in turn enriched their holdings with several raids on Safavid Tabriz from 1514 onward.¹⁰²

Given the absence of any detailed discussions of Chinese porcelain in Timurid texts, the Timurids may have viewed these wares as utilitarian objects, not *objets d'art*. This is the position of Islamic sources on the subject, particularly the Ottomans,¹⁰³ yet Chinese

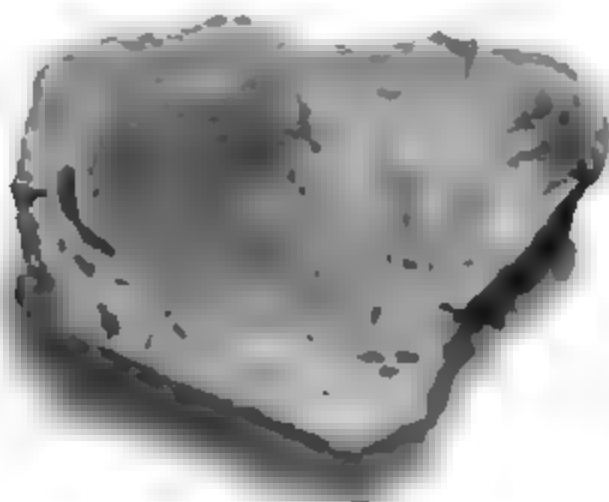


Fig. 86

Ceramic fragment
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1400–1650
Underglaze-painted ceramic
Leningrad, State Hermitage, SA-12876

blue-and-white had an important impact on the Timurid aesthetic, one visible in the kitabkhana's experimentation with chinoiserie. Timurid drawings in the albums show numerous imitations as well as creative pastiches of imagery found on blue-and-white porcelains. Many of the circular designs often identified as textile designs may actually be models based on the interior decoration of Chinese plates and bowls.

Convergence in the royal house of cultural forces from China, Turco-Mongol Central Asia, and Islamic Iran created the possibility of a wholly new art to serve Timurid needs. As foreign rulers centered in an Iranian Islamic urban context, however, the Timurids gave primacy to indigenous artistic forms and conventions necessary for conformity with the political circumstances that unfolded after Timur's death. While not exclusive of outside influences, the Timurid kitabkhana with its Persianate ideals filtered the impact of Central Asian and Chinese traditions, modifying their motifs and ideas and thus integrating them into the dominant visual language.

Although the powerful non-Muslim traditions of Turco-Mongol Central Asia were altered to fit within the framework of Iranian Islamic culture, they were still mainstays of Timurid rule. Clearly a source of religious and social tension for the dynasty, the continued influence of Turco-Mongol ideas confirms the Timurid reluctance to abandon the beliefs that vaulted them to power, and these traditions were viewed as a source of ethnic pride and distinction. Less defined and to some extent in retreat during the second half of the fifteenth century, their influence was nevertheless pervasive and was responsible for a number of distinctive aspects of Timurid culture.

While their Turco-Mongol heritage clearly affected the dynasty's administrative and military organization, legal system, social posture, and historical perspective, the cultural and artistic manifestations of these beliefs are more difficult to trace. Little is known about Turco-Mongol artistic expression in the period preceding the ascent of Timurid culture or its influence in the arts of both the Il-Khanid and less-studied Chaghatayid Mongol dynasties in Iran and Central Asia.¹⁰⁴ Timurid culture, however, maintained certain aspects of the dynasty's native ethnic traits, though they were directed into new configurations consistent with dynas-

tic aims. During their rule Turki, the Timurid's native tongue, emerged as a major literary language by adopting Persian as a model. For example, the poetry written in Turki by a number of Timurid princes (see Appendix II) and their poets subscribed to the same conventions, meters, and imagery as Persian poetry.¹⁰⁵ Even more symptomatic was the revival of Uighur, an old Central Asian script; widely used by Turks in their homelands from at least the ninth century, it was adopted for administrative purposes by the Mongols during the thirteenth century. With Timur's annexations and the increased practice of Islam in eastern Central Asia in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Uighur script began to appear farther west and usually in a Timurid context. In the past allied to both Buddhist arts of the book and Mongol rule, it served the Timurids as a symbol of the dynasty's non-Islamic heritage.¹⁰⁶ Recognition of the importance it held in the Timurid world is symbolized by the letters the Ming emperor sent to Shahrukh, written in Chinese, Persian, and Uighur.¹⁰⁷

At least four fifteenth-century manuscripts written with Uighur script and known to have been executed in the Timurid realm have survived, their Central Asian elements boldly inserted into an Islamic Iranian format:¹⁰⁸

An Anthology, copied for Jalaluddin Firozshah in 1431–32 at Yazd, now in the British Library, London (Or.8193);

A Mi'rajnama (Book of the ascent) and *Tadhkira-i awliya* (Notice of saints), the latter copied at Herat in 1436, now bound together in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (Suppl. Turc. 190);

A Kutadgu bilig (Wisdom of royal glory), copied at Herat in 1439, now in the Nationalbibliothek, Vienna;

An 'Atabat al-Haqayiq (Threshold of verities) copied in Samatqand in 1444, now in the Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul (Ms. Aya Sofya 4012).

While Persianate conventions govern their format, the general effect is nonetheless that of an alien tradition. The *Kutadgu bilig*, for example, is a Turco-Islamic Mirror for Princes, a royal didactic manual written in 1069 which places old Central Asian Turkish concepts of royalty and wisdom in an Islamic context, a most appropriate text for Timurid readers.¹⁰⁹ The fact that

the Timurids were foreign conquerors who rose from lands religiously, culturally, and ethnically heterogeneous was nowhere more emphatically stated than in the Timurid copy of the *Mir'ajnama*, an Islamic text describing Muhammad's ascent, written in Uighur and Arabic scripts and including Buddhist visual imagery. Its unique illustrations represent a major departure in iconography for the kitabkhana; in details such as the flaming inferno, polycephalous angels, and zoomorphic demons, Buddhist inspiration is unmistakable (cat. no. 25, f. 34b).

These vital impulses from non-Muslim sources confirm the existence of powerful subcurrents in Timurid art and culture that existed not only among the ruling house but in other strata of society as well. Throughout the century heterodox dervish orders, particularly the Qalandar in Central Asia, had considerable influence in Timurid centers, and their practices were reportedly shaded with both tantric and shamanistic overtones.¹¹⁰ These sentiments were widespread in Iran and Central Asia, as reflected in a mysterious, powerful series of paintings, popularly known as the *Siyah-Qalam* paintings, of the fourteenth or fifteenth century. In somber colors they depict demons (fig. 87) and possibly dervishes (cat. no. 133), often with strong Buddhist associations. More than sixty works of great variety, some highly finished and on silk, others rough in technique and on coarse paper, bear attributions to this artist, if indeed there was one artist, which is doubtful. Their exact date and place of production are the subject of controversy, and attributions have included Qipchaq-Golden Horde territory, a Mongol atelier in Central Asia, eastern Anatolia of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and early Timurid Samarqand and Herat.¹¹¹ While undoubtedly produced within an Islamic context, scholarship's inability to place these unique works securely in the established scheme of Islamic painting reflects the existence of a Turco-Iranian cultural milieu that was elastic, receptive, and inventive in its responses to a variety of influences.

The plurality in outlook among ruling members of the Timurid state during Shahrukh's reign was instrumental in paving the way for a renewed influx of artistic themes from China. This influence animated Timurid court life, spurred increased commercial exchanges, and served as both aesthetic counterpoint



cat. no. 25

"The Prophet Muhammad and the
Angel Gabriel"

From a *Mir'ajnama*

Herat? c. 1425-50

f. 34b

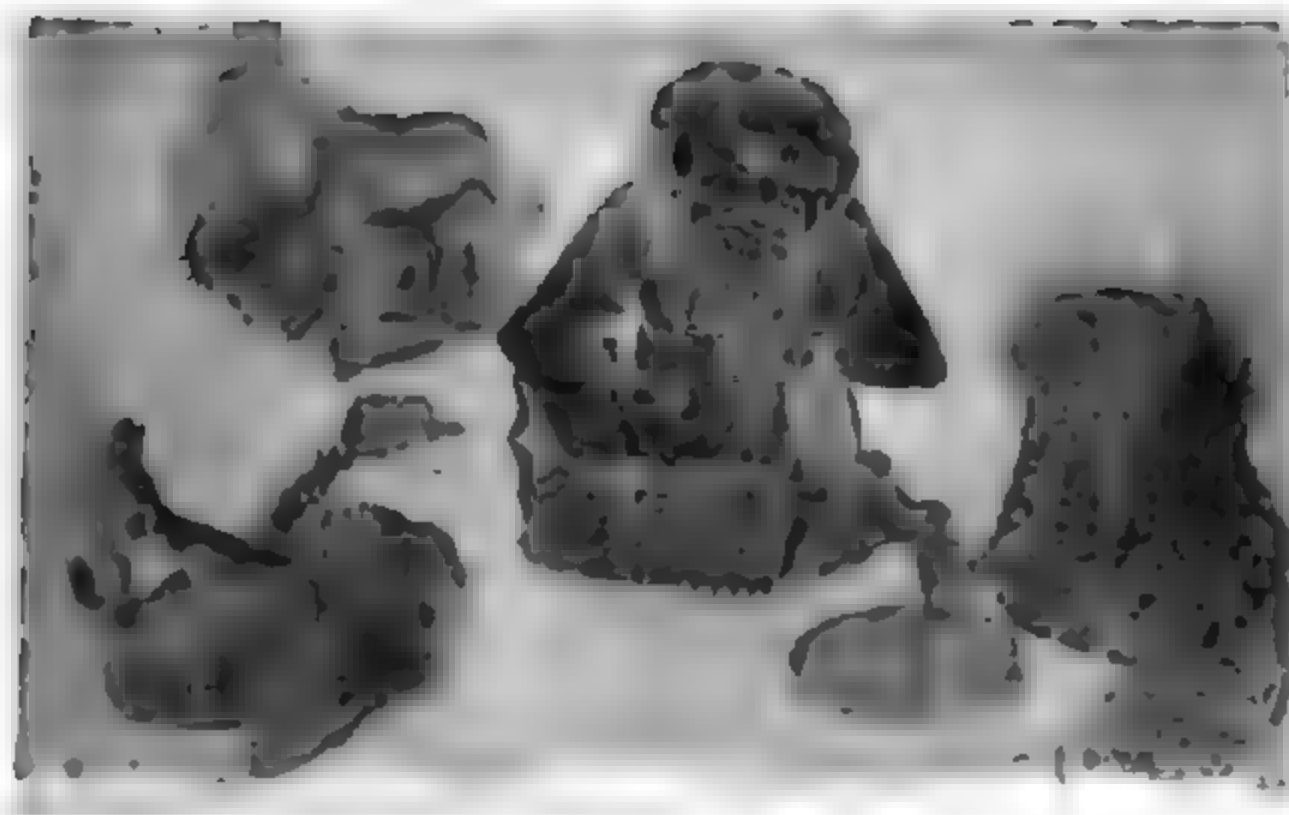


fig. 87

"Seared Demons"

Iran or Central Asia, fifteenth century
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on silk

14 x 20.5 cm (5 1/2 x 8 in.)

New York, The Metropolitan Museum
of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund,
1968, 68.171

and complement to traditional Islamic concerns. The Timurid *kitabkhana* saw in it an alternative forum for a vast array of innovations that can be counted among the most intriguing in Islamic art.

This interest on the part of the Timurid dynasty, however, represents in many ways merely a continuation of the eastern Islamic world's historic fascination with Chinese material wealth. The link had been vastly intensified when Mongol rule joined the two regions; the Il-Khanids and the Chaghatayids for a time exercised authority under the aegis of the highly sinicized Yuan dynasty, the senior Mongol branch with its capital first at Karakorum and then Khanbaliq (Beiping).¹¹² Even prior to this a variety of Turkic and Mongol tribal groups like the Qara-Khitai had exercised control in the frontier lands between Iran and China; often sinicized, these tribes were important disseminators of Chinese decorative motifs.¹¹³ By the advent of the Timurids Central Asia and the borderlands of eastern Islam clearly represented a milieu in which Islamic and Chinese ideas and attitudes had converged for many centuries. This was still the case in the early fifteenth century, as demonstrated by Ghiyathuddin's report on Qamul, a town in the borderlands of Central Asia and China, where a magnificent mosque, raised by the Muslim governor, faced an enormous Buddhist temple, which housed numerous "idols."¹¹⁴ What differentiated Timurid exploitation of China's artistic heritage from

earlier efforts was its systematic assimilation of Chinese elements. Not only were they skillfully fit by the *kitabkhana* into the dynasty's codification of the Persianate tradition, but they became characteristic components of Timurid art.

In shaping Timurid dreams and desires, the *kitabkhana* successfully created an aesthetic that articulated the ruling house's new ideology. Their assimilation of creative talent into the fabric of the state brought artist and patron into an unprecedented relationship that made possible the dynasty's carefully orchestrated projection of cultural splendor. Such extraordinary works as many of the album paintings and drawings, Ulugh-Beg's wooden box, and the *Mi'rajnama* demonstrate the importance Timurid origins played in the development of its art. Throughout their rule this rich, heterogeneous mixture of cultural strains continued to affect how the Timurids saw themselves and how they wished others to see them—critical concerns in the politically fragmented and culturally competitive Turco-Iranian world of the fifteenth century. The flurry of political and military events that followed the death of Shahrukh altered many of the aesthetic ideals forged by midcentury, but the nature of the association between artist and patron remained constant. This relationship provided an enduring matrix that served as the basis for the brilliant cultural accomplishments of the next generation of Timurid rulers.



cat. no. 191

"Demon in Chains"

Iran or Central Asia, fifteenth century

1. Despite some suggestions to the contrary (Priscilla Soucek, "The Arts of Calligraphy," in *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia: 14th-16th Centuries*, ed. Basil Gray [Boulder: Shambhala, 1979], p. 177, n. 13; Bernard O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan* [Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers in assoc. with Undena Publications, 1987], p. 56, n. 96), the manuscripts and personnel mentioned in this document convincingly associate it with the atelier of Baysunghur at Herat. See also M. K. Özergin, "Temürlü Sanatına ait eski bir belge; Tebrizli Ca'fer'in bir arsi," *Sanat Tarihi Yıllığı* 6 (1976): 471-318.
2. V. V. Barthold, *Ulugh Beg*, vol. 2 of *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, trans. V. and T. Minorsky (reprint, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), p. 32.
3. Maria Eva Subtelny, "The Poetic Circle at the Court of the Timurid Sultan Husain Baiqara, and Its Political Significance," Ph.D. diss. (Harvard University, 1979), pp. 84-91.
4. Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 2: 487.
5. Ehsan Yar-Shater, "Some Common Characteristics of Persian Poetry and Art," *Studia Islamica* 16 (1962): 62.
6. Oleg Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 157; Grabar, "An Art of the Object," *Artforum* 15, no. 7 (March 1974): 41.
7. "Dost-Muhammad's Introduction to the Bahram Mirza Album," in Wheeler Thackston, *A Century of Princes: Sources on Timurid History and Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, in press).
8. See, for example, Dost-Muhammad's account of the high favor and informal relationship the painter Khalil enjoyed with Prince Baysunghur, in *ibid.*
9. Subtelny, "The Poetic Circle," pp. 114-15.
10. "Dost-Muhammad," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.
11. "Mir Dawlatshah Samarqandi's *Tadhkirat al-shu'ara*," in *ibid.*
12. Marianna Shreve Simpson, "The Production and Patronage of the Haft Aurang by Jam in the Freer Gallery of Art," *Ars Orientalis* 13 (1982): 93-119, describes how the kitabkhana may have functioned under Safavid sponsorship.
13. For the Dietz album, see M. S. Ipsiroglu, *Saray-Alben. Diezische Klebebände aus den Berliner Sammlungen*, vol. 8 of *Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland*, ed. Wolfgang Voigt (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1964), for the Topkapı albums, see Filiz Cagman, "On the Contents of the Four Istanbul Albums H.2152, 2153, 2154 and 2160," in *Between Iran and China. Paintings from Four Istanbul Albums*, ed. Ernst Grube and Eleanor Sims, *Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia*, no. 10 (London: University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, Percival David Foundation, 1980), pp. 31-36.
14. Earlier investigations of this phenomenon can be found in Lisa Golombek, "Toward a Classification of Islamic Painting," in *Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, ed. Richard Ettinghausen (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1972), pp. 23-34; in Marie Swietochowski, "The Development of Traditions of Book Illustration in Pre-Safavid Iran," *Iranian Studies* 2, nos. 1-2 (Winter-Spring 1974): 49-87; and in Ettinghausen, "The Categorization of Persian Painting," in *Studies in Judaism and Islam*, ed. Shelomo Morag et al. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1981), pp. 55-63.
15. Richard Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting* (Geneva: Skira, 1962), pp. 50-55.
16. "The *Tarikh-i Rashidi*," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.
17. Martin Bernard Dickson and Stuart Cary Welch, "The Canons of Painting by Sadiq Bek," in *The Houghton Shahnameh* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 1: 259-69.
18. V. Minorsky, trans., *Calligraphers and Painters: A Treatise by Qadi Ahmad, Son of Mir Munshi* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery Publications, Smithsonian Institution, 1959), p. 178.
19. Eight of these large figural drawings are found in the Topkapı Sarayı Library: H.2152, ff. 44a, 49b, 50a-b, 57b, 93b. They may represent cartoons for wall painting, as statements by contemporary observers confirm that both Timur and his descendants often decorated the walls of their palaces with this type of figural imagery. See E. Stehoukine, *Les Peintures des manuscrits Timurides* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1954), pp. 2-15.
20. For an example of the latter, see a seated figure in H.2152, f. 86b.
21. Thomas Woodward Lentz, Jr., "Painting at Herat under Baysunghur ibn Shahrugh," Ph.D. diss. (Harvard University, 1985), pp. 518-36, 538-47.
22. This component would resonate in later manuscripts, such as the Turcoman *Tarikh-i Tabari* of 1470 (Chester Beatty Library, Ms.144, f. 20a); see Appendix III, no. 8.
23. Swietochowski, "Traditions of Book Illustration," pp. 52-53.
24. Priscilla Soucek, "Illustrated Manuscripts of Nizami's *Khamsa*, 1386-1482," Ph.D. diss. (Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1971), pp. 368-89.
25. See Grube and Sims, eds., *Between Iran and China*, figs. 114-27.
26. See Abdul-Razzaq's report, excerpted in W. Chambers and W. Jones, *The Asiatic Miscellany* (reprint, London: J. Wallis, 1787), pp. 119-20; also Grube and Sims, eds., *Between Iran and China*, figs. 83a-b, for an example in H.2154 of what this Chinese painting may have resembled.
27. Basil Gray, "A Timurid Copy of a Chinese Buddhist Picture" in Ettinghausen, *Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, pp. 35-38.
28. See Ernst Grube, "The Problem of the Istanbul Album Paintings," in Grube and Sims, eds., *Between Iran and China*, pp. 2-4, where the art historical scholarship associated with this group of paintings is summarized.
29. See Cagman, "Contents," and Zeren Tanindi, "Some Problems of Two Istanbul Albums, H.2153 and 2160," in Grube and Sims, eds., *Between Iran and China*, pp. 31-36, 37-41; B. W. Robinson, "The Turkman School to 1503," in Gray, ed., *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia*, pp. 217-43.
30. The pioneering article on Timurid decorative arts is Ernst Grube, "Notes on the Decorative Arts of the Timurid Period," in *Gururajamanjari: Studi in onore di Giuseppe Tucci* (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1974), 1: 233-79, pls. 24-111.
31. "Ghiyathuddin Naqqash's Report on a Timurid Mission to China," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Jessica Rawson, *Chinese Ornament: The Lotus and the Dragon* (London: British Museum, 1984), pp. 122-44, 159.
34. Topkapı Sarayı Library, H.2152, ff. 45b, 51a, 57a-b, 71a, 83a, 84b, 87a, 88a, 89a-b, 94a.
35. A panel of this type is preserved with Baysunghur's name in H.2152, f. 96b, and illustrated in Grube, "Notes on the Decorative Arts," fig. 124, as a textile design, although the same general configuration is found on the walls of the Timurid shrines of Ishratkhana (1464) and Aq Saray (1460-70). See G. Pugachenkova, "Ishrat-Khaneh and Ak Saray, Two Timurid Mausoleums in Samarkand," *Ars Orientalis* 9 (1963): pl. II, fig. c (erroneously reversed with fig. b); M. E. Masson et al., *Mavzoler Ishratkhana* (Tashkent, 1958), p. 101, fig. 31.
36. Similar examples are also preserved in the Israel Museum; see Rachel Milstein, *Islamic Painting in the Israel Museum* (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 1984), p. 211, no. 283.

37. Linda Komaroff, "Timurid to Safavid Iran: Continuity and Change," *Mosyus* 20 (1979-80): 11-14.
38. Boris Deniké, "Quelques Monuments de bois sculpté au Turkestan Occidental," *Ars Islamica* 2 (1915): 69-83; Grube, "Notes on the Decorative Arts," pp. 263-67.
39. G. Curatola, "Some Ilkhanid Woodwork from the Area of Sultaniyya," *Islamic Art* 2 (1987): 97-103.
40. Deniké, "Quelques Monuments," figs. 9-11.
41. Helmut von Erffa, "A Tombstone of the Timurid Period in the Gardner Museum of Boston," *Ars Islamica* 21-22 (1946): 184-90; Lisa Golombek, *The Timurid Shrine at Gazur Gah*, Art and Archaeology Occasional Paper, no. 15 (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1969), pp. 66-67.
42. H. 2352, ff. 34b-35a, 86a.
43. See, for example, Jerome Clinton, *The Duan of Manchur Damghani. A Critical Study*, Studies in Middle Eastern Literatures, no. 1 (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1972), pp. 128-89. See also W. L. Hanaway, "Bag: In Persian Literature," in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1988), 3: 395-96.
44. O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan*, pp. 64-74.
45. Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilber, *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 1: 120-29.
46. R. Hillenbrand, "The Use of Glazed Tile-work in Iranian Islamic Architecture," *Actes des VIII Internationalen Kongress für Iranische Kunst und Archäologie München* 7-10. September 1976 (Berlin, 1979), pp. 545-54; O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan*, pp. 68-70.
47. This motif, more often associated with Mughal art in India, was present from the beginnings of Timurid decoration and is seen carved in the stone tympanum above the entrance to the Friday mosque at Samarqand.
48. O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan*, pp. 67-68.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
50. *Ibid.*
51. Ruy González de Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane, 1403-1406*, trans. Guy le Strange (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1928), pp. 257-61; Ibn Arabshah, *Tamerlane or Timur the Great Amir, from the Arabic Life of Ahmed ibn Arabshah*, trans. J. H. Saunders (London: Luzac & Co., 1936), p. 218.
52. Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*, p. 287.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 254.
54. Emil Vasilevich Bretschneider, *Medieval Researches from Eastern Asiatic Sources* (London: K. Paul Trubner, 1910), 2: 262, 292, 283, n. 1106.
55. According to the *Ma'athar-i Mahmud Shahi*, the sultan of Malwa sent these fabrics and other gifts in 1467 to the Timurid prince Abu-Sa'id; see Iqtidar Hasan Siddiqui, "Influence and Prestige of the Sultan of Delhi in India and the Neighbouring Countries, with Special Reference to Central Asia—Fifteenth Century," *Central Asiatic Journal* 29, nos. 1-2 (1985): 110.
56. Other likely Timurid examples can be found in R. Neumann and G. Murza, *Persische Seiden* (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann Buch und Kunst Verlag, 1988), cat. nos. 95, 102B; 97, 56.
57. A *saraperda* (cloth enclosure) is depicted in a double-page garden scene (c. 1480) probably executed at Herat and now a part of the *Muraqqa'-Gulshan* in the former Imperial Library, Tehran; see Basil Gray, *Iran. Persian Miniatures—Imperial Library* (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1957), pls. 16-17.
58. P. A. Andrews, "The Tents of Timur: An Examination of Reports on the Qutlugh at Samarqand, 1404," in *Arts of the Eurasian Steppelands*, ed. Philip Denwood, Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia, no. 7 (London: University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, Percival David Foundation, 1977), p. 144.
59. Peter Andrews, "The Felt Tent in Middle Asia: The Nomadic Tradition and Its Interaction with Princely Tentage," Ph.D. diss. (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1980), pp. 361-67.
60. Andrews, "The Tents of Timur," pp. 167-68.
61. E. Spuhler, "Carpets and Textiles," in *The Cambridge History of Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 6: 698-700.
62. Amy Briggs, "Timurid Carpets," *Ars Islamica* 7 (1940): 20-54.
63. John Mills, "Small Pattern Holbein Carpets in Western Paintings," *HALI* 1, no. 4 (Winter 1978): 326-34.
64. Robert Pinder and Jackie Stranger, "Kufic Borders on 'Small Pattern Holbein' Carpets," in *ibid.*, pp. 335-58.
65. Michael Frances, untitled typescript, 1987, illustrates a number of possible Timurid examples.
66. Bretschneider, "A Chinese Medieval Account of Western Precious Stones," in *Medieval Researches*, 1: 175-76; Manuel Keene, "The Lapidary Arts in Islam," *Expedition* 24, no. 1 (Fall 1981): 26-39.
67. Bretschneider, *Medieval Researches*, 2: 260-61.
68. Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*, p. 270.
69. Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i Jahangir, or Memoirs of Jahangir*, trans. A. Rogers, ed. H. Beveridge (reprint, London, 1909-14), 2: 193-96; V. Ball, "A Description of Two Large Spinel Rubies, with Persian Characters Engraved upon Them," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, ser. 3, vol. 3, no. 2 (1894): 380-99.
70. Robert Skelton, "The Relations between the Chinese and Indian Jade Carving Traditions," in *The Westward Influence of the Chinese Arts*, ed. William Watson, Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia, no. 3 (London: University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, Percival David Foundation, 1972), pp. 101-2; Grube, "Notes on the Decorative Arts," pp. 252-56.
71. Teng Shu-ping, *Hindustan Jade in the National Palace Museum* (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1983), p. 77.
72. Abu Raihan Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Biruni, *Kitab al-jamahir fi ma'rifat al-jawahir*, ed. F. Krenkow (Hyderabad, A.H. 1355), pp. 198ff. The authors are indebted to Ralph Pinder-Wilson for this reference as well as his willingness to share his extensive knowledge of Timurid jades.
73. Barthold, *Uluq-Beg*, p. 167.
74. Ralph Pinder-Wilson and William Watson, "An Inscribed Jade Cup from Samarqand," *British Museum Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (1960): 19; Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, *Baburnama*, trans. Annette Susannah Beveridge (London: Luzac & Co., 1971), pp. 27, 67; al-Biruni, *Kitab al-jamahir*, pp. 198ff.
75. al-Biruni, *Kitab al-jamahir*, pp. 198ff.
76. R. H. Pinder-Wilson, "A Persian Jade Cup," *British Museum Quarterly* 26, nos. 1-2 (1963): 49-50; see also P. W. Meiser, "Edelmetallarbeiten der Mongolen Zeit," *Ostasiatische Zeitschrift* 24 (1938): 209-13.
77. S. Howard Hansford, *Chinese Carved Jades* (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1968), p. 89.
78. Bretschneider, *Medieval Researches*, 2: 249, n. 1044.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 263.
80. Hansford, *Chinese Carved Jades*, p. 110.
81. James C. Y. Watt, *Chinese Jades from Han to Ch'ing* (New York: Asia Society, John Weatherhill, 1980), p. 23.
82. Teng, *Hindustan Jades*, p. 77; Teng ("Jades Believed to Have Been Bestowed and Transmitted to Foreign Lands" [in Japanese], *National Palace Museum Monthly of Chinese Art*, no. 47 [February 1987]: 11-31) appears to

believe the Gulbenkian jade may be of Timurid manufacture. The authors are indebted to Dr. Thomas Lawton for his reading and summary of this article.

83. A. Sakisian, "À-propos d'une coupe à vin en agate au nom du Sultan Timouride Hussein Baicara," *Syria* 6 (1925): 274-79.

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84. See, for example, the wine cup dated 1612-13 made for Jahangir, now in the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence; M. Brand, *Rhode Island School of Design Museum Notes* 72, no. 2 (October 1985): 11-12.

85. Grube, "Notes on the Decorative Arts," p. 255.

86. Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*, pp. 248, 269-70.

87. Linda Komaroff, "The Timurid Phase in Iranian Metalwork: Formulation and Realization of a Style," Ph.D. diss. (Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1984).

88. Basil Gray, "Blue and White Vessels in Persian Miniatures of the 14th and 15th Century Reexamined," *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* (London: Oriental Ceramic Society, 1951), 24: 23-30.

89. Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*, p. 288.

90. Grube, "Notes on the Decorative Arts," p. 235, figs. 1-2; A. Ivanov, "A 878/1473-4 Earthenware Dish from Mashhad," *Sootscheniya Gosudarstvennogo Ordena Lenina Ermitazha*, no. 45 (Leningrad, 1980), pp. 64-66. See also M. Whitman, "Persian Blue and White Ceramics: Cycles of Chinoiserie," Ph.D. diss. (Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1978).

91. Ivanov, "A 878/1473-4 Earthenware Dish," pp. 64-66.

92. Khwandamir mentions one Herat court painter of the late fifteenth century, Mawlana Hajji Muhammad Naqqash, who took the exceptional step of manufacturing his own imitations of Chinese ceramics. Arthur Lane, *Later Islamic Pottery: Persia, Syria, Egypt, Turkey* (London: Faber & Faber, 1957), pp. 99-100.

93. Grube, "Notes on the Decorative Arts," pp. 241-42.

94. Julian Raby and Unsal Yücel, "Chinese Porcelain at the Ottoman Court," in *Chinese Ceramics in the Topkapı Sarayı Museum Istanbul*, ed. John Ayers (London: Sotheby's Publications, 1986), 1: 46.

95. Regina Krahl, "Porcelain of the Yuan and Early Ming Dynasties," in *ibid.*, 2: 481-83.

96. Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane*, p. 224.

97. Ellen Smart, "Fourteenth Century Chinese

Porcelain from a Tughlaq Palace in Delhi," *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* (London: Oriental Ceramic Society, 1977), 41: 199-210.

98. Bretschneider, *Medieval Researches*, 2: 283, 291, n. 1128, 292-93.

99. Porcelains also may have reached Iran as ballast in Chinese ships, see Filiz Cagman and Zeren Tanindi, *The Topkapı Sarayı Museum: The Albums and Illustrated Manuscripts*, trans. and ed. J. M. Rogers (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1986), p. 113.

100. Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, *Baburnama*, trans. Annette Susannah Beveridge (London: Luzac & Co., 1971), p. 80; Chinese blue-and-white shards also have been found at Samarqand, as noted by Raby and Yücel, "Chinese Porcelain," p. 28, n. 8.

101. Ayers, ed. *Chinese Ceramics in the Topkapı Sarayı Museum*, vols. 1 and 2; John Alexander Pope, *Chinese Porcelains from the Ardabil Shrine*, 2d. ed. (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1956).

102. *Ibid.*, p. 12. A number of porcelains in both these collections are inscribed with the word *bihbud* in Arabic script, which has long been a subject of controversy among scholars and numismatists. The word again appears inscribed on the 1472-73 agate cup made for the Timurid ruler Sultan-Husayn Mirza (cat. no. 150) as well as a fifteenth-century jade bowl in the Topkapı Sarayı Museum (TKS 2/1851). If *bihbud* is indeed a name, it can be associated with a *Bihbud* who has been identified as either the keeper of Husayn Mirza's treasury, or less likely, a page at his court. See Robert Skelton, "Characteristics of Later Turkish Jade Carving," in *Fifth International Congress of Turkish Art*, ed. G. Fehér (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1978), p. 798; Nurdan Erbahar, "Non-Chinese Marks and Inscriptions," in Ayers, ed., *Chinese Ceramics in the Topkapı Sarayı Museum*, 1: 121.

103. Raby and Yücel, "Chinese Porcelain," pp. 46-47.

104. Oleg Grabar, "The Visual Arts, 1050-1350," *The Cambridge History of Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 5: 626-38; G. A. Pugachenkova and L. I. Rempel, *Istoria Iskusstva Uzbekistana* (Moscow, 1965).

105. Ehsan Yar-Shater, "Persian Poetry in the Timurid and Safavid Periods," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, 6: 979; H. R. Ruemer, "The Successors of Timur," in *ibid.*, p. 139.

106. For a general overview of pre-Muslim Central Asian traditions in the arts of the book, see Emil Esin, "The Bakhshi in the 14th to 16th Centuries," in Gray, ed., *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia*, pp. 281-94.

107. Joseph F. Fletcher, "China and Central

Asia, 1368-1884," in *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations*, ed. J. K. Fairbank (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 214, n. 30.

108. Q. P. Sertkaya ("Some New Documents Written in the Uighur Script in Anatolia," *Central Asiatic Journal* 18 [1974]: 180-81) lists five other Uighur manuscripts, two dated 1435 and 1488 and two copies by scribes known to have worked in Timurid centers, which may well be part of this group. See also T. Gandjei, "Note on an Unknown Poem of Haidar in Uighur Characters," *A Locust's Leg: Studies in Honor of S. H. Taqizadeh* (London: Percy Lund, Humphries & Co., 1962), pp. 64-69, where the author discusses a Turkish poem in Uighur script by the court poet of Iskandar ibn Umar-Shaykh, now included in a manuscript in the former Imperial Library, Tehran.

109. Robert Dankoff, trans. and ed., *Wisdom of Royal Glory (Kutadgu Bilig): A Turko-Islamic Mirror for Princes by Yusuf Khass Hajib* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1983.

110. Esin, "Bakhshi," pp. 286-88.

111. See articles by B. W. Robinson, A. A. Ivanov, Emil Esin, and Bayhan Karamagarali in Grube and Sims, eds., *Between China and Iran*.

112. J. A. Boyle, "Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khans," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, 5: 417; Grabar, "The Visual Arts," 652-57. The Chinese decorative influence has been studied most extensively by Basil Gray, see, for example, "The Chinoiserie Elements in the Paintings in the Istanbul Album," in Grube and Sims, eds., *Between Iran and China*, pp. 85-89.

113. C. E. Bosworth, "The Political and Dynastic History of the Iranian World," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, 5: 147-48; Rawson, *Chinese Ornament*, p. 148.

114. "Ghiyathuddin," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.

cat. no. 148

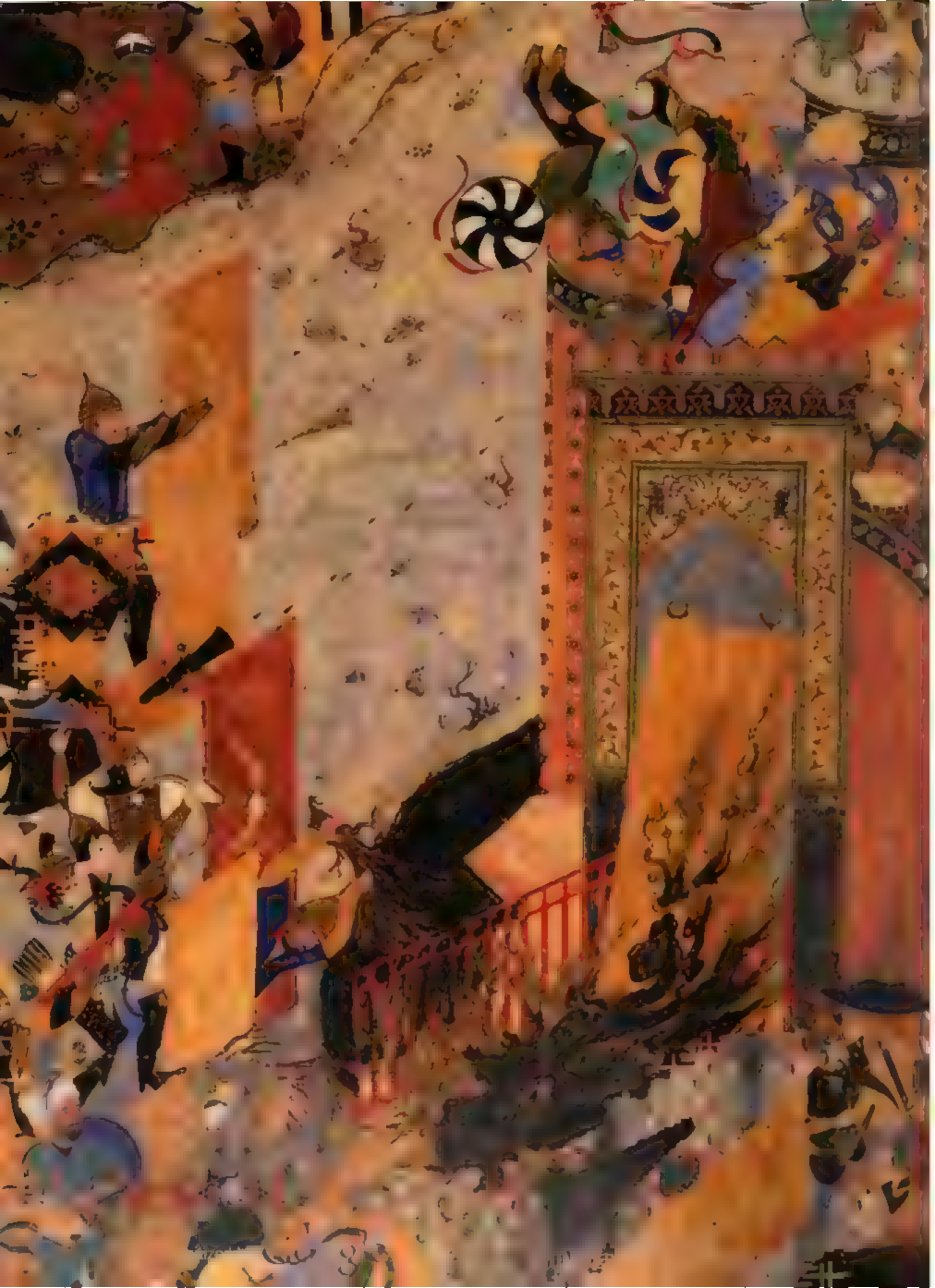
Illustrated page from a *Shahin of Sa'di* Herat, dated A.H. Rajab 891 (A.D. June 1481)
148



نام خود و ده جان نهد
 جدا و نه خشنده و سیکه
 عین می که در گزده شش صاف
 بر او پستان گرون فرا
 نیز گردن کش نیز بکیر و جوار
 گز خشم گمرازد و در پشت
 بر باد عجب جوید که
 بر خویش امانی نباشد خویش
 بر نند و پاک زیاده کار
 بر بر زبان باسی شین
 بر ترک نه است که شکر

حکیم سخن در زبان اندر
 گم خطا بخش و نیز شایر
 هر دو که شد بیعت نیات
 بر کار او بر زین سیار
 عین را و در نیز بر اند
 جو باز می با جوار و ش
 بر بی کان چشم گمرازی
 جو کما کاش بر اند و پس
 بر شش دارد و ده او دکار
 بر شش گمرازد و از تو حق
 شود شاگرد و شش زوی می





Sultan-Husayn and the Restructuring of the Timurid Facade

O

N JUNE 28, 1458, Jahanshah Qaraqoyunlu, a Black Sheep Turcoman prince from western Iran and a former vassal of Shahrukh, rode triumphantly into Herat. Although his occupation of the city lasted less than a year, it reflected the profound change in the Timurid world since the death of Shahrukh in 1447 and signaled the rising power of the Turcoman dynasties in the west (cat. no. 134). In shattering any remaining illusion of Timurid military prowess, this event forced the dynasty to reevaluate its vision of itself and modify its artistic directions. At the core of these developments were the dynasty's attempts—as articulated by the actions of the princes of the royal house—to reconcile itself to the altered circumstances of a vastly diminished empire while trying to maintain the facade of its earlier power.

Jahanshah's sack of Herat was precipitated by the disintegration of Timurid power after Shahrukh's death and Abdul-Latif's murder of his father, Ulugh-Beg, two years later. Ghiyathuddin Khwandamir, an early sixteenth-century Timurid historian, gives a sense of the trauma caused by the Turcoman invasion of Khurasan: "When Amir Jahanshah had completely conquered Jurjan and spent some time in Isfarayin, he set out with his massive army for Herat. . . . All the residents of Herat, sayyids, ulema, and the poor and unfortunate, were in fear and trembling of the Turcomans, while hooligans and mobs set about pillaging and plundering."¹

Without a powerful leader of Shahrukh's, not to mention Timur's, stature, the dynasty was fractured into a number of entities organized around various members of the royal house. Three forces accelerated this decline: the constant internecine fighting among the princes of the dynasty (cat. no. 135), the erosion of power in the west due to the rise of the Turcoman confederations, and the increasing presence of the Uzbeks in the east.

In Transoxiana Abdul-Latif was deposed in May 1450 after a reign of only six months and was succeeded by Abdullah ibn Ibrahim, another of Shahrukh's grandsons. Abdullah was almost immediately chal-

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cat. no. 135

"Assault on a Castle" (detail)
From a lost manuscript
Iran, c. 1500



cat. no. 134
War mask
Iran, c. 1450–1500

lenged by Ala'uddawla ibn Baysunghur and then by Abu-Sa'id ibn Muhammad, a great-grandson of Timur descended from Miranshah. By June 1451 Abu-Sa'id had marched on Samarqand, taken Abdullah prisoner, and ordered his execution.

The breakdown of the Timurids' already fragile centralized rule and the ensuing chaos is well documented by Khwandamir:

It is an amazing and strange thing that during this year throughout the regions and fortresses of Khurasan there were several effective rulers, none of whom was in obedience to another: Amir Jahanshah held from Astarabad to Sabzawar in his mighty grip; Mirza Abu-Sa'id governed in Balkh; Mirza Sultan-Ibrahim sat in Herat and bowed to no one else; Mawlana Ahmad Yasaul had made fast Ikhtiyaruddin fort and took no notice of any of the sultans; Mirza Sultan-Sanjar resided in Merv; Mirza Shah-Mahmud dreamed of independence in Tus; Berkā the Mughul held the Tiratu fortress; . . . and the fort at Tabas was under the occupancy of Amir Uways ibn Khwandshah.²

Abu-Sa'id's gradual rise to power out of this political turmoil was facilitated by the support he received from the Uzbeks under Abu'l-Khayr Khan (r. 1429–68). Descended from the Mongol Jochi's youngest son, Shiban (and thus also known as the Shaybanids), the Uzbeks were one of many Mongol tribes still active in Transoxiana. They enjoyed a certain prestige because of their unquestioned Chingizid lineage, and from their base in Khwarazm, to the northeast of Khurasan, they reasserted the traditional power of the Mongol military dynasty.³ Unlike the Timurids who had become increasingly urbanized throughout the fifteenth century, the Uzbeks had remained a steppe-based force on the fringes of urban Islamic culture.⁴ Abu'l-Khayr's military and political support was so important to the Timurids that he was given one of Ulugh-Beg's daughters in marriage. By the early 1450s, however, his relationship with Abu-Sa'id had degenerated, and the two fought frequently but inconclusively until the former's death in 1468.

Abu-Sa'id, however, was not able to check the Qaraqoyunlu under Jahanshah. The Qaraqoyunlu, like their rivals the Aqqoyunlu (the White Sheep Turcomans), were seminomadic tribes of Turkic descent whose center of power was located in what comprises today parts

cat. no. 135
"Assault on a Castle
from a low manuscript
Iran, c. 1550



of Turkey, Soviet Azerbaijan, and northwestern Iran. Although little is known of the early history of the Aqqoyunlu and Qaraqoyunlu, they both claimed descent from the legendary Turkic ruler Oghuz Khan of Central Asia and were firmly established in eastern Anatolia by the fourteenth century. With the decline of Mongol power throughout the fourteenth century these tribes coalesced into fairly cohesive confederations with distinct political and cultural aspirations.

While the Aqqoyunlu initially allied themselves with the Timurids, it was the Qaraqoyunlu who established the strongest ties with them. Jahanshah in particular prospered during Shahrukh's reign. Jahanshah's relationship to the Timurids, however, was one of political expediency and lacked any personal or tribal bonds; with the collapse of Timurid power he expanded eastward into their territory. By 1452 Turcoman forces had taken the cities of Qum and Sawa as well as Sultaniyya, Qazwin, Isfahan, and most of Mesopotamia and central Iran. Despite numerous attempts by the Timurids to regain these lands, their loss was final.

Although Abu-Sa'id was able to maintain amicable relations with Jahanshah after the latter's withdrawal from Herat in 1458 on account of political problems in western Iran, both the Turcomans in Iran and the Uzbeks in Central Asia represented a continuing problem for the Timurids. With the Uzbeks this did not reach a critical stage until the beginning of the sixteenth century when Muhammad Khan Shaybani (r. 1500–1510), Abu'l-Khayr's grandson, captured Samarkand from the last Timurid ruler of the city and established Uzbek authority in Transoxiana.

In the case of the Turcomans the problem was more immediate and erupted in 1469, when Abu-Sa'id and his troops were defeated in a fierce battle with the Aqqoyunlu forces of Uzun Hasan near Ardabil. Uzun Hasan's victory marked the dynamic rise of the Aqqoyunlu, who had replaced the Qaraqoyunlu as the most powerful force in western Iran during the 1460s. The turmoil that followed Abu-Sa'id's defeat is typical of the incessant struggles that plagued these years and reflects the complex political and social alliances that occurred as various princes rose to and fell from power.

Uzun Hasan, having vanquished the reigning Timurid prince, sought to establish himself as the rightful successor to both Shahrukh and Timur.⁵ He turned Abu-Sa'id over to Yadgar Muhammad, a great-grandson of

Shahrukh, who then executed him for the murder of his great-grandmother Gawharshad, which Abu-Sa'id had ordered in 1457.⁶ Uzun Hasan and his son Ughurlu Muhammad, who had played a major role in Abu-Sa'id's demise, celebrated this event by commissioning a series of wall paintings at one of their palaces in Isfahan depicting the Timurid ruler's decapitation.⁷ After Abu-Sa'id's death Uzun Hasan declared Yadgar Muhammad the legitimate heir to Abu-Sa'id's throne (establishing him as a puppet much as the Timurids had done with the Mongol shadow khans) and dispatched him to take Khurasan, which had come under the control of the Timurid Sultan-Husayn (r. 1470–1506), one of Umar-Shaykh's great-grandsons.

Sultan-Husayn repulsed Yadgar Muhammad's initial attack and seems to have worked out a *modus vivendi* with Uzun Hasan whereby he accepted the latter's nominal overlordship. This situation, however, quickly collapsed as Sultan-Husayn refused to accede to the numerous demands made by Uzun Hasan, and a new campaign was launched against Herat. While Sultan-Husayn defeated the initial Aqqoyunlu thrust, subsequent ones forced him to flee the city, which was immediately occupied by Yadgar Muhammad. A rift, though, developed between Yadgar Muhammad and Uzun Hasan, when the new ruler of Herat demanded the removal of all Aqqoyunlu troops. This, coupled with Yadgar Muhammad's inability to win the support of the city's nobles and religious leaders, led to his downfall. On the night of August 21, 1470, less than two months after his occupying Herat, the city was secretly turned over to Sultan-Husayn.⁸

Sultan-Husayn (cat. no. 136) is described by Babur as being "lively and pleasant, rather immoderate in temper, and with words that matched his temper." According to Babur, his "eyes were slanted, and he had the build of a lion, slender from the waist down. Even when he was very old and had a white beard, he wore red and green silk."⁹

Sultan-Husayn quickly established a truce with Uzun Hasan by agreeing to accept the latter's suzerainty in return for the removal of Aqqoyunlu forces from Khurasan and the restoration of strategic cities like Astarabad, which had fallen to the Turcomans in 1469.¹⁰ This truce allowed Sultan-Husayn to consolidate his power and ultimately retain control over Herat until the beginning of the sixteenth century. Struggles with his sons and



cat. no. 136

"Sultan Husayn Mirza"
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1500-1515

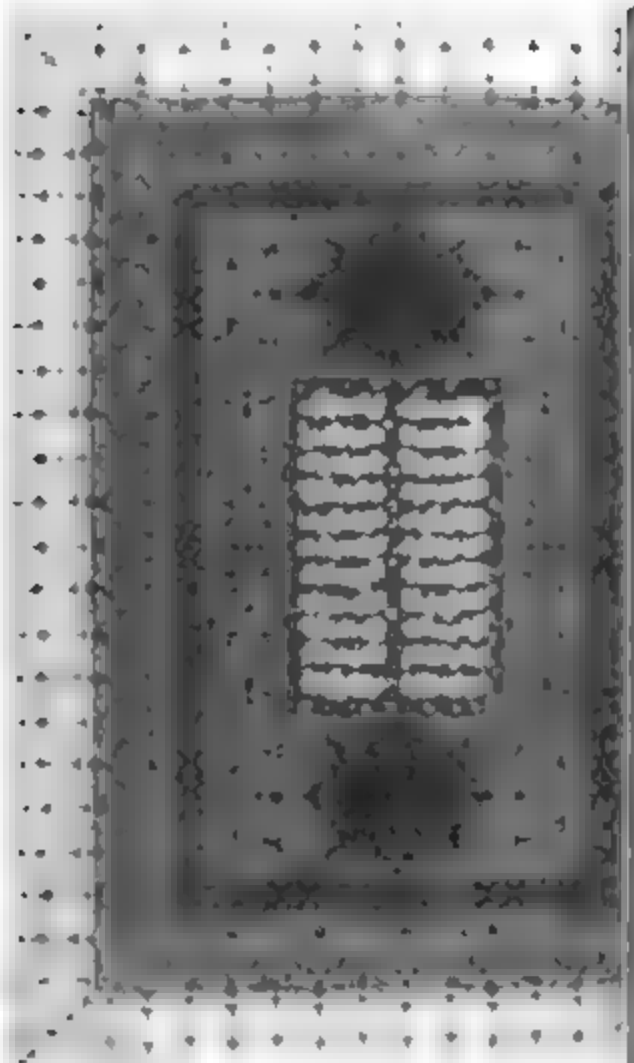


fig. 90

Illuminated page from a *Khamsa*
of Nizami
Tabriz, c. 1480
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
29 x 19.2 cm (11 3/8 x 7 1/2 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H. 62, f. 22

other Timurid princes, especially during the second half of his rule, prevented him, however, from extending his power beyond Khurasan. The constant pressure on the Timurids from the Uzbeks in the east further limited their sovereignty over Khurasan and Transoxiana. Instead they were reduced to a fragile existence centered around the various cities they were able to control such as Herat and Samarkand; success depended upon their carefully balancing the many forces that threatened their existence. For Sulṭan-Husayn this meant maintaining the status quo against the Turcomans and Uzbeks on the one hand and his rivals within the dynasty, including his own sons, on the other.

A copy of a *Khamsa* of Nizami (fig. 88) testifies to the turmoil of these years and reflects the fate that must

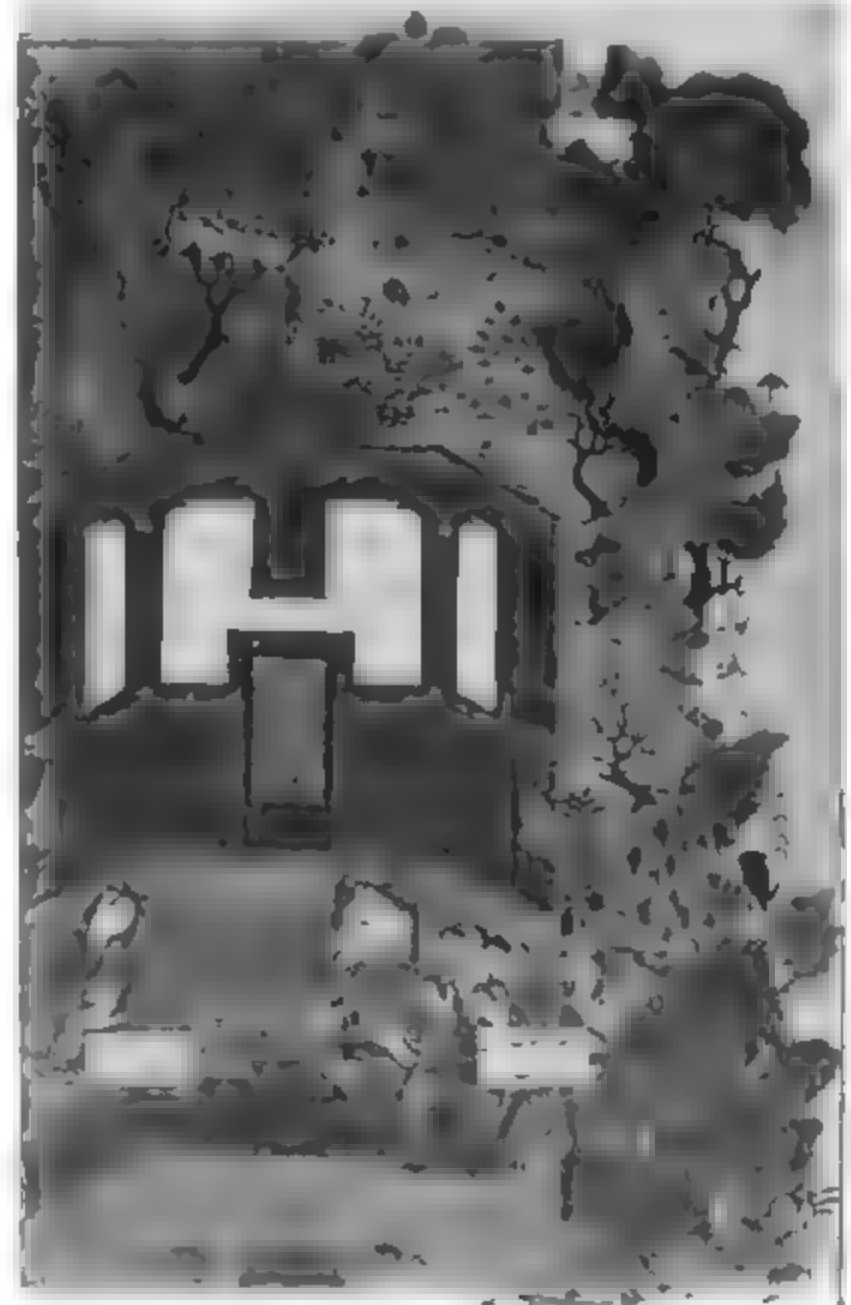


fig. 89

"Bāḥram Gūr in the Green Pavilion"
From a *Khamsa* of Nizami
Tabriz, c. 1480
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
29 x 19.2 cm (11 3/8 x 7 1/2 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H. 62, f. 189b

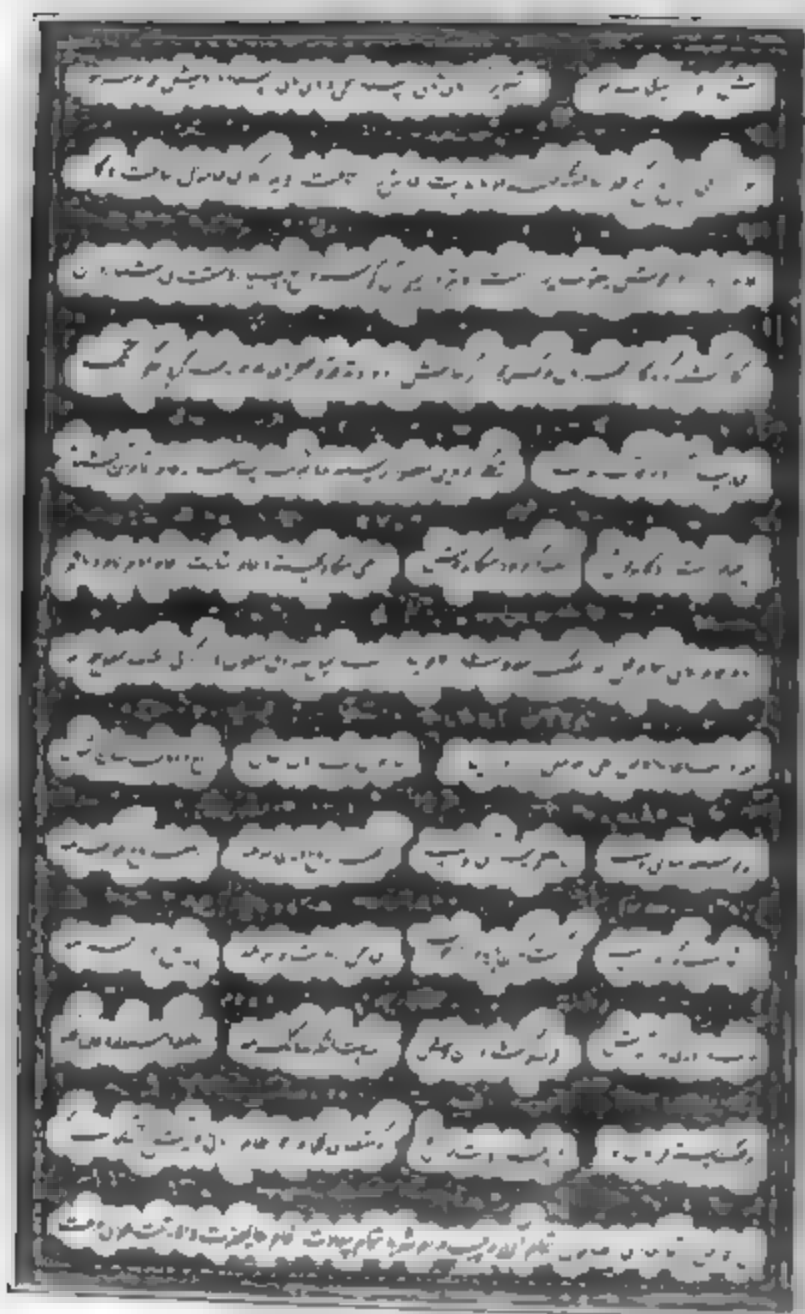
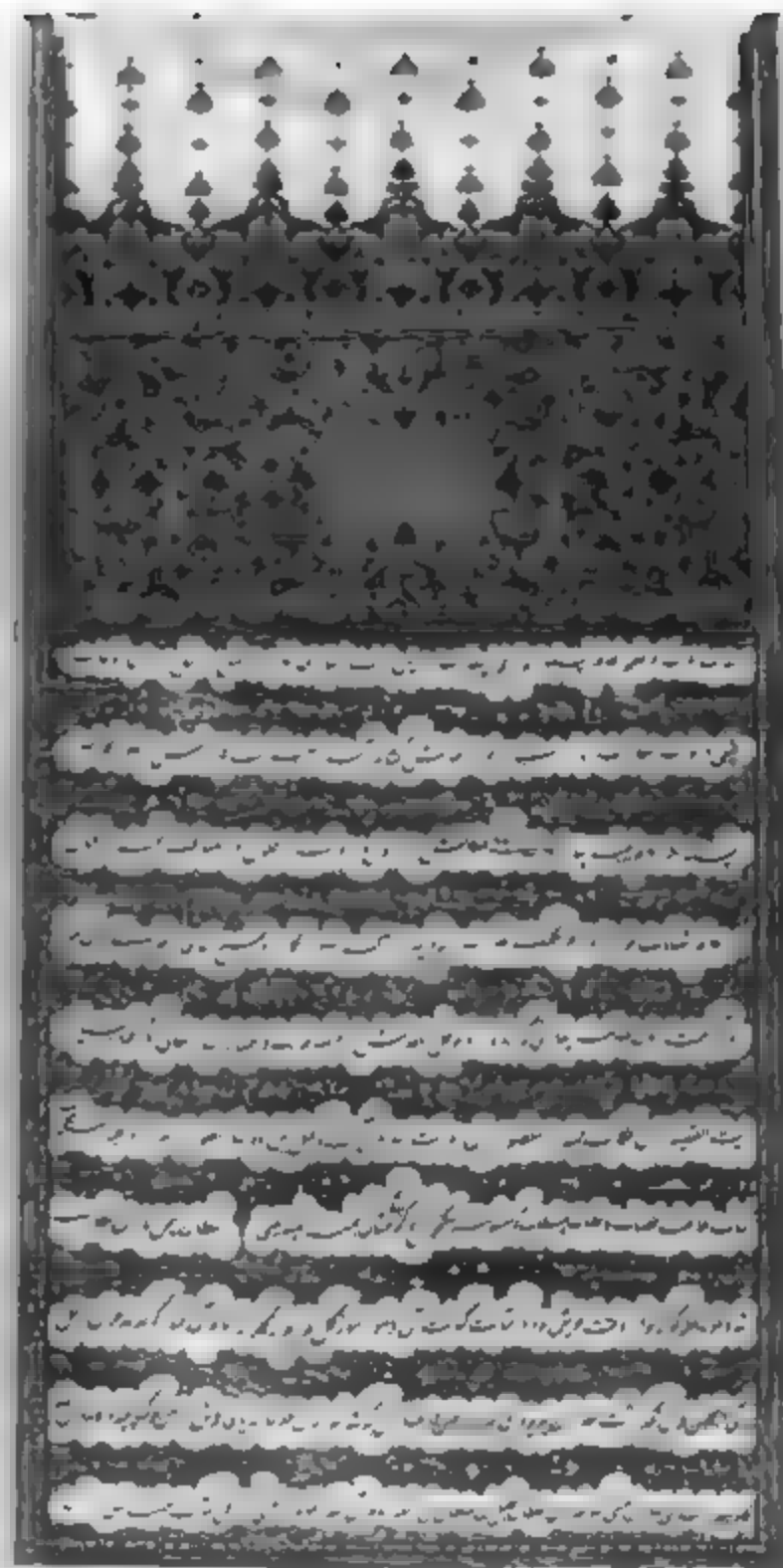


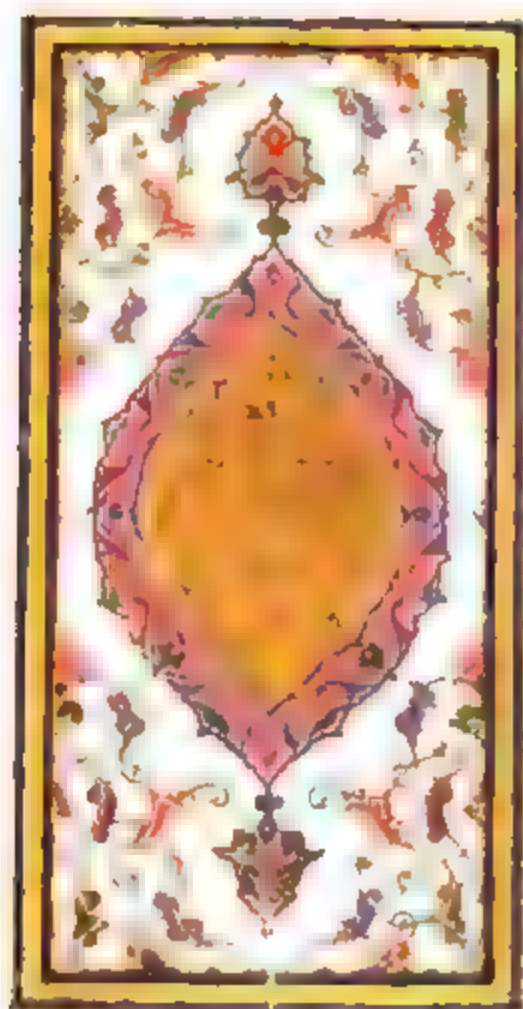
fig. 88

Colophon from a *Khamsa* of Nizami
Tahira, c. 1480
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
29 x 19 x 2 cm (11 3/8 x 7 1/2 in)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H.762, ff. 116b-117a

have befallen many works of art. Commissioned by the Timurid prince Abu'l-Qasim Babur and begun by the renowned calligrapher Azhar, the manuscript was unfinished in 1457, when the prince died. After the Qaraqoyunlu sack of Herat it passed first into the hands of Pir-Budaq, Jahanshah's mercurial and rebellious son, and then to the Aqqoyunlu Khalil-Sultan, who turned the copying of the text over to the calligrapher Anisi and commissioned the renowned Aqqoyunlu artists



Shaykhi and Darwesh-Muhammad to execute the illustrations. When Khalil-Sultan died, the still uncompleted manuscript entered the workshop of his brother Sultan Ya'qub, and according to the book's colophon he also "strove to have it finished and exerted much effort, but suddenly the victor death grabbed him by the collar, and he too stepped into the wilderness of nonexistence."¹¹ The manuscript was finally completed during the reign of Shah Isma'il, the founder of the Safavid dynasty. The manuscript's bold paintings (fig. 89), which border on the fantastic in effect, and the detailed illuminations (fig. 90), the majority of which were probably executed at Sultan Ya'qub's court,¹² have a vitality that disguises the book's passage from the Timurids to the Qaraqoyunlu and then the Aqqoyunlu before entering the Safavid library.



cat. no. 158

Illuminated frontpiece from a
Makhsuz al-asrar of Mir Haydar
 Khwarazmi Turkiguy
 Tabriz, dated A.H. 25 Jumada 881
 (A.D. 24 August 1478)
 ff. 1b-2a

The *Khamsa*'s paintings and illuminations demonstrate the close relationship between Turcoman and Timurid artistic expression. Through drawings such as those in the albums in Berlin and Istanbul, the Turcomans had access to the visual vocabulary formulated by the Timurid kitabkhana. The movement of artists between western and eastern Iran during this time further entrenched the Timurid aesthetic among the Turcomans, creating a situation in which artists like the great calligrapher Sultan-Ali Mashhadi, could work for both Timurid and Turcoman patrons.¹⁵ Consequently, superb Turcoman manuscripts like the *Shah-nama* copied for Sultan-Ali Mirza at Gilan in 1494 (cat.



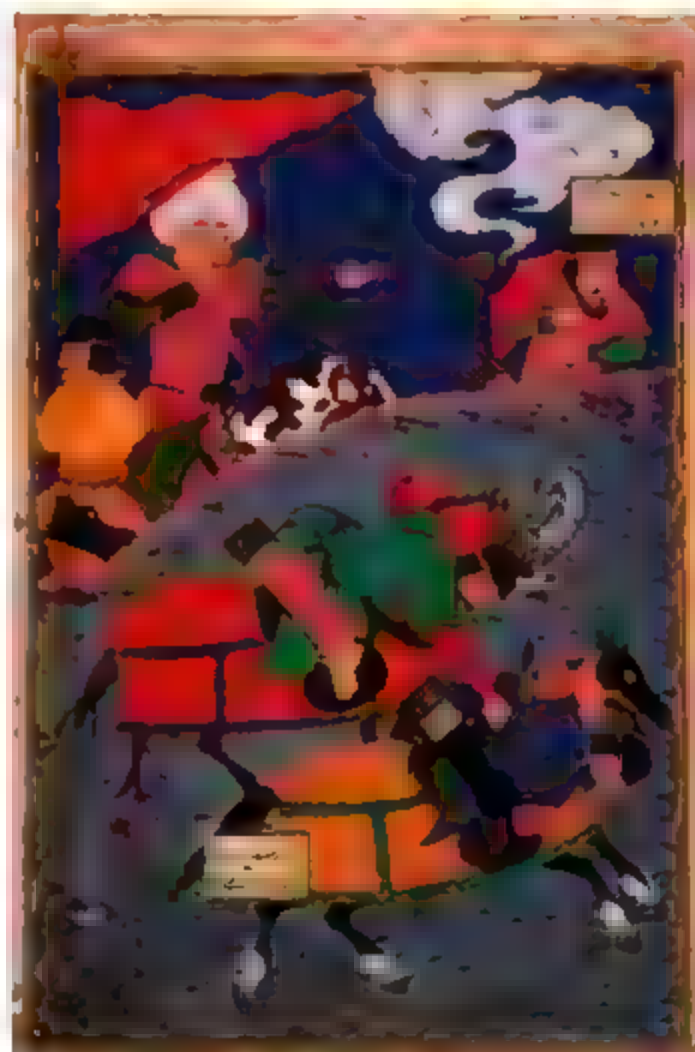
cat. no. 138

"A Prince Visiting a Hermit"
From a *Makhzan al-asrar* of Mir
Haydar Khwarazmi Turkuguy
Tabriz, dated A.H. 25 Jumada 883
(A.D. 24 August 1478)
L 27b

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no. 137), the *Makhzan al-asrar* (Treasury of mysteries) copied by Sultan-Ali al-Ya'qubi in 1478 (cat. no. 138, ff. 1b–2a), and the *Diwan* of Qasim copied for Pir-Budaq (cat. no. 139, f. 1b) closely follow the Timurids' deluxe productions. The Turcomans, however, imaginatively expanded the aesthetic possibilities of Timurid forms by intensifying the palette (cat. no. 138, f. 27b), exaggerating proportions (cat. no. 137), and experimenting with more open and dynamic patterns of illumination (cat. no. 139, f. 2a).

With the disintegration of centralized political control, religious groups, especially Sufi or mystical orders, gained considerable political and social power. While the majority of these, such as the Kubrawi, were Sunni, numerous Shiite and dervish orders also enjoyed great popularity. Indeed, as Sufi and Shiite traditions began to merge during the second half of the fifteenth century, distinctions between orthodox Islam and Shiism blurred. The rising popularity of these various orders made it essential for the Timurids to establish a broad base of support with them.



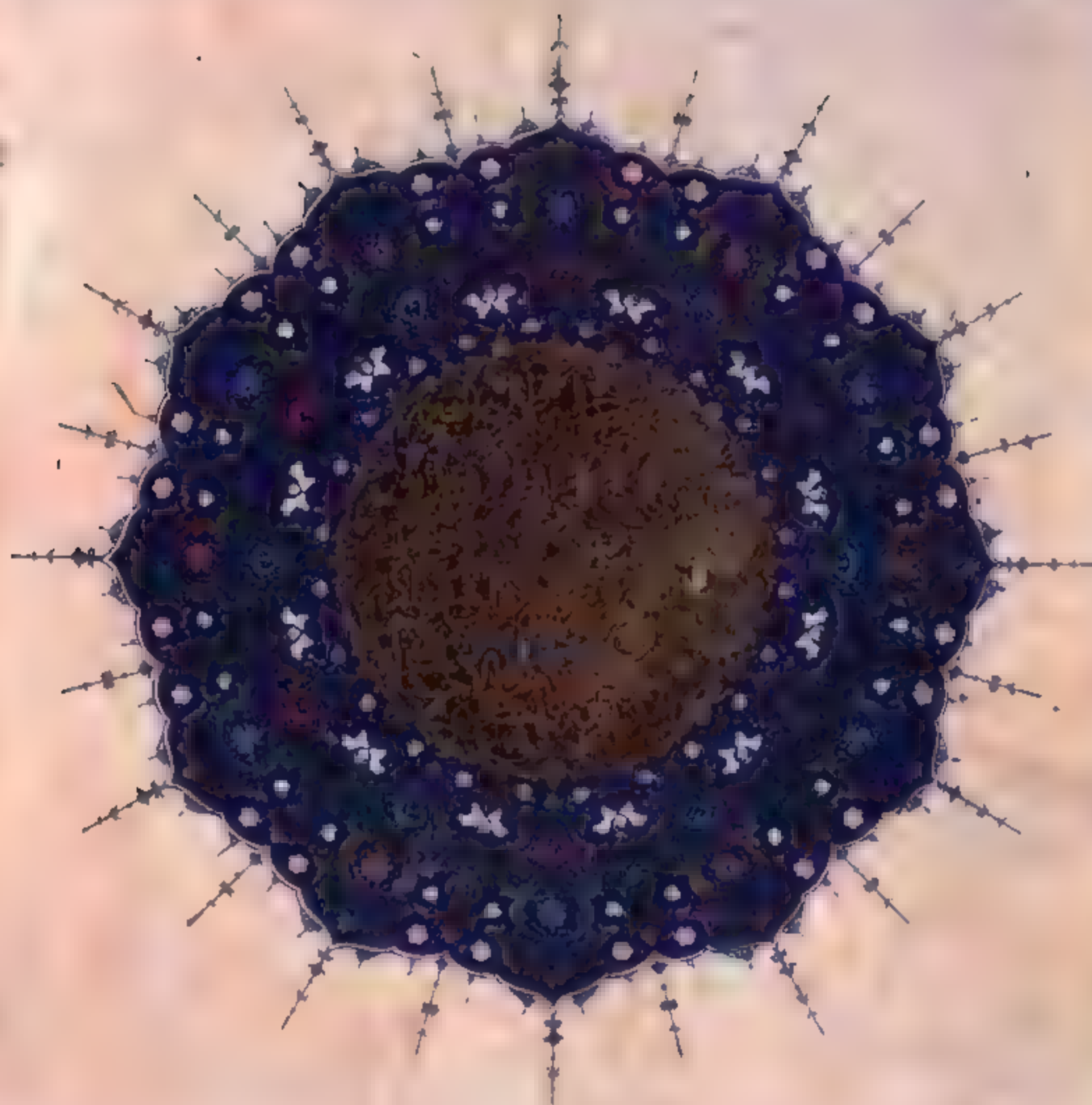
cat. no. 137

"Battle between Zangha and Awkhasht"
From a *Shahnama* of Firdausi
Gilan, dated A.H. 899 (A.D. 1493–94)



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1001



cat. no. 139

Illuminated page from a *Diwan*
of Qasim
Iran, dated A.H. 864 (A.D. 1458-59)
f. 2a

cat. no. 139

Debache from a *Diwan* of Qasim
Iran, dated A.H. 864 (A.D. 1458-59)
f. 1b



In the complicated network of late fifteenth-century Timurid political associations charismatic Sufi leaders—whether Sunni or Shiite—played important roles by conferring on secular rulers temporal legitimacy and religious prestige, much as they had done during Timur's reign.¹⁴ The many late fifteenth-century paintings of rulers visiting hermits or ascetics (cat. no. 140, f. 273a) attest to the critical importance of these associations. In return for supporting the ruling elite, the shaykhs were rewarded with political favors and sizable land grants.¹⁵ For example, Khwaja Ahrar, the charismatic leader of the Naqshbandi order, founded at the end of the fourteenth century, gained enormous influence in Samarqand during the reigns of Abu-Sa'id and Sultan-Husayn. Instrumental in Abu-Sa'id's rise to power, Khwaja Ahrar developed strong popular support and was able to direct local politics as well as acquire great wealth. He controlled thousands of acres of cultivated land in *waqf*, patronized religious establishments, and owned commercial properties, gardens, mills, and houses.¹⁶ His tremendous prestige enabled him to convince Abu-Sa'id to repeal the loathsome *tamgha* tax in Samarqand and Bukhara in 1460.¹⁷

In addition to the Kubrawi and Naqshbandi other groups prospered, including the Khalwati, who appealed to the lower classes, and the heretical Hurufis, who had been implicated in the 1427 attempt to assassinate Shahrukh. While this interest in popular piety can be traced to Timur, the relationship between the ruling elite and the leaders of these orders had undergone a profound change since the beginning of the century. Whereas Timur was able to control and channel the considerable influence of these leaders, playing one against the other to further his grandiose purposes, Abu-Sa'id and Sultan-Husayn were dependent upon the support of the shaykhs and their orders, a reflection of declining Timurid power.

Although the majority of these mystical orders operated within established bounds, several espoused Shiism, often in conjunction with Sufism, as a means of social protest.¹⁸ To counter this trend, the Timurids patronized both Shiite and Sunni shrines and saints, while also demonstrating their piety through such traditional means as the commissioning of Korans (cat. no. 141). The support of Shiite institutions, however, was for the most part done at a distance from the center of political power in such a way that it would

cat. no. 140

"Iskandar Visiting the Hermit"

From a *Khawase* of Nizami

Hicri (?), dated A.H. 900 (A.D. 1494-95)

f. 273a



Cat. no. 141

Illuminated frontispiece from a Koran
Iran, dated A.H. 845 (A.D. 1442)
ff. 1b-2a



not directly conflict with the interests of the *shari'a*. Under Shahrukh, for instance, both Mashhad and the "rediscovery" of the alleged grave of Ali at Mazar-i Sharif¹⁰ became pilgrimage attractions. Shahrukh was careful not to actually patronize any monuments at these sites, letting this responsibility fall to his wife Gawharshad and others. The wealth acquired by these centers through trade, construction, and pilgrimage allowed their inhabitants to exert ever more economic and political power.

Consequently, Shahrukh's successors recognized the necessity of appeasing Shiite interests in order to avoid the social unrest the Shiite often instigated. This policy was ultimately not successful, as a number of orders, most particularly the Safavids, gained considerable popular support and challenged the dynasty's role.

But during the second half of the fifteenth century the Timurids tried to avert this dissension by numerous acts of homage. Abu-Sa'id, for example, minted coins that used both Shiite and Sunni formulae, while Sultan-Husayn patronized both heterodox and orthodox shrines. Inclined toward Shiism, Sultan-Husayn expanded the shrine at Mazar-i Sharif founded by Shahrukh. He even took the extraordinary step of trying to include the names of the twelve imams in the *khutba*, but he was dissuaded by the celebrated mystic and poet Abdul-Rahman Jami (1414–92) and other members of the ulema. In addition the sultan built shrines for popular Sufi saints like Jalaluddin Purani and Khwaja Abdullah Taqi as well as a *khanaqah*, *madrasa*, and *Dar al-Sayyada* (Abode of Sayyids) for the Sayyids of Herat.²⁰ A superbly worked gold ring (cat. no. 142) inscribed with numerous Shiite references, may be another product of this effort to appeal to Shiite as well as Sunni.

Indeed Sultan-Husayn in his "Apologia," presumably written sometime between 1486 and 1492,²¹ does not distinguish between Sunni and Shiite factions in acknowledging his debt to various religious communities, especially the dervishes:

If [some former rulers] relied on their own armies and might, my reliance is on His favor and grace. If He humbled some of them because of the baseness of their lineage, my forefathers for seven, nay, seventy generations have been ennobled to be rulers and even saints. If some, because of their magnificence and conceit in rule, have been too mighty and proud to acknowledge dervishes, He has made me humble and supplicant before that exalted group.²²

In an effort to establish himself as a concerned and pious Muslim ruler, Sultan-Husayn also stresses in the "Apologia" his role as a protector of religion and restorer of the waqfs and other institutions that had either been abandoned or destroyed during the tumultuous 1450s and 1460s:

In the time of some, tyrannical ministers and wrong-thinking potentates wrecked the pious foundations and, spending the proceeds on debauchery and entertainment, have indulged in ungodliness and sacrilege. However, the overseers [I] appointed to the foundations have repaired all the damage and

gladdened the people of merit. In former times, because the foundations were in ruins, students were aggrieved and teachers deprived, but now thank God that in the capital there are nearly one hundred educational institutions where religious learning and certain knowledge are to be found.²³

Religious orders and dervishes were not the only groups to benefit from the restructuring of Timurid power during the second half of the fifteenth century: the amirs and viziers also prospered. Through the issuance of *soyurghals* and other forms of land grants and the renewed prosperity of trade routes and agriculture, both groups had access to large resources. Concomitantly state-controlled lands and revenues decreased, forcing Sultan-Husayn to rely on casual sources of income such as presents, which were often solicited and frequently expected, and on increased taxation.²⁴ As a result there was a decentralization of state-sponsored projects and a weakened projection of the imperial facade, the inevitable consequences of an ever greater dependence on the patronage of wealthy individuals who filled the vacuum left by the reallocation of resources.

In this new situation the continued dominance of

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cat. no. 142

Ring
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1450–1500



fig. 91
 "Portrait of Mir Ali-Sher Nawa'i"
 Central Asia, c. 1500–1515
 Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
 on paper
 16 x 7 cm (6 1/8 x 2 3/4 in.)
 Mashhad, Imam Reza Shrine Library

the ruling house depended on a secure and stable economic environment. The maintenance of civil order and the fostering of a viable commercial climate are among the accomplishments that Sultan-Husayn prides himself on in his "Apologia":

If, in former days, traveling merchants, other strangers, and wayfarers had insurmountable difficulty going from their homes to their destinations because of brigands and highway robbers, now swift retribution has reduced that God-forsaken group to chaff and dispatched them to hellfire. At every stage there are lofty caravansaries for travelers and exalted fortresses providing safety for wayfarers in which they may find protection from the cold and shade from the heat. Aside from protection they can obtain whatever they want therein and reach their destinations easily. In every place there are stationed troops to prevent crime and prohibit robbery.⁴¹

The person who benefited most from this new political and economic situation was Mir Ali-Sher Nawa'i, who became during the last decades of the fifteenth century one of the most important forces in the cultural life of the Timurid world (fig. 91). Sultan-Husayn's *kukaltash* (foster brother) and close companion, Mir Ali-Sher, was a renowned philanthropist, poet, and author. Descended from a family of Uighur *bakhshis* who had been intimately connected with the family of Umar-Shaykh, Timur's third son and Sultan-Husayn's great-grandfather,⁴² Mir Ali-Sher was made keeper of the royal seal at the beginning of the ruler's reign. By 1472 he was appointed amir in the *diwan-i a'la* (the supreme *diwan*, or council), which dealt with military matters. Several years later, however, he became embroiled in a court intrigue and was "awarded" the post of governor of Astarabad.⁴³ When he returned from there a year later, he gave up his official position within the government, though he retained his title of amir.

By relinquishing his role within the government, however, Mir Ali-Sher was able to establish a unique relationship with Sultan-Husayn. Although the source of his enormous wealth is not known (he may have been skimming from the state treasury),⁴⁴ he strengthened his position with his ruler by making substantial gifts to him that often exceeded 100,000 dinars.⁴⁵ In addition he also distributed large sums of money to important government officials, thus ensuring his pop-

ularity and fulfilling a task normally undertaken by the sultan. Shrewd, highly cultivated, and temperamental, Mir Ali-Sher exploited his close relationship with Sultan-Husayn to acquire vast power at court. In the intricate and often convoluted politics of late fifteenth-century Herat, he was the preeminent arbiter of culture and etiquette. And it is precisely these qualities of refinement and manner that Babur noted of Mir Ali-Sher in his memoirs, adding that the amir was also renowned for his Turki poetry and his patronage of talented musicians, painters, and poets.¹⁰

Mir Ali-Sher's wealth allowed him to undertake a number of major architectural projects. According to Khwandamir's *Makarim al-akhlaq* (Noble qualities), he built more than 135 structures including 52 caravansaries or *ribats*, 19 cisterns, 20 mosques, 14 bridges, 9 baths, 7 khanaqahs, and a madrasa.¹¹ Although the majority of these monuments no longer exist, many of them must have played a significant role in the economy of late fifteenth-century Khurasan. Indeed, given the relatively modest number of state-sponsored projects initiated during Sultan-Husayn's reign, the baths, bridges, and caravansaries of Mir Ali-Sher may have been necessary to maintain the trade routes and commercial activities mentioned by Sultan-Husayn in his "Apologia." Mir Ali-Sher's restoration of the great *masjid-i jami'* of Herat from 1498 to 1500, a task that normally would have been undertaken by the ruler, further reflects both the decentralization of patronage in the late fifteenth century and his enormous wealth.

Mir Ali-Sher's most significant architectural accomplishment, however, was the *Ikhlasīyya* complex built opposite Sultan-Husayn's madrasa (fig. 92) and to the northeast of Gawharshad's *musalla* on the outskirts of Herat. It consisted of a mosque, madrasa, khanaqah, bath, hospital, and a place for the recitation of the Koran. In the deed of endowment for the *Ikhlasīyya*, Mir Ali-Sher gives a sense of its topography and enumerates the various activities that took place there:

And to the north of the mosque I built a dome for mellifluous Qur'an readers to read the Qur'an in, which became known as the *dar al-huffaz*. In the two iwan halls of the madrasa, east and west, I appointed two lecturers, one to teach law and the other Hadith. In each circle of study eleven students are to be occupied. This madrasa, since it has been

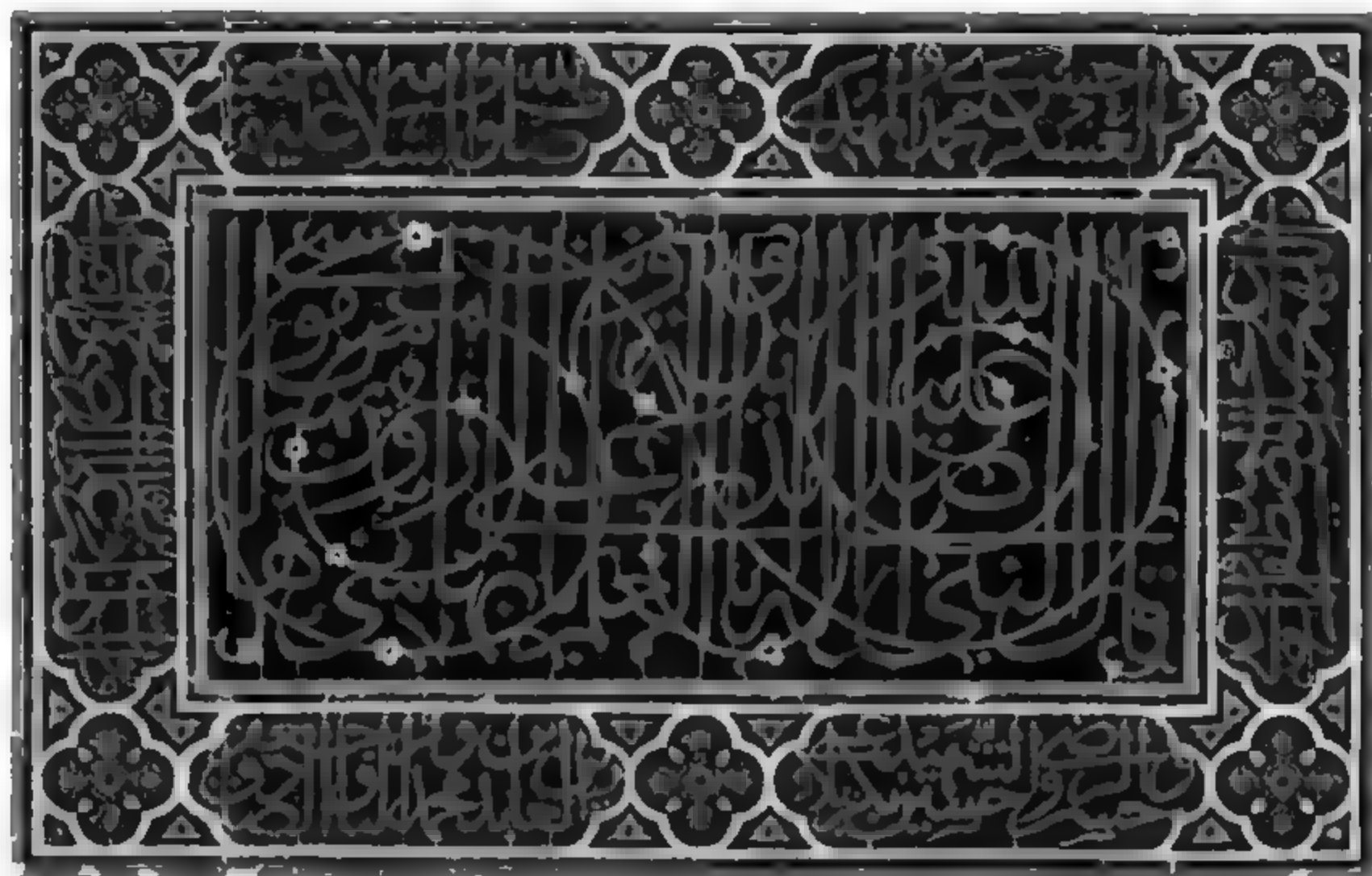


fig. 91

Minaret from the madrasa of Sultan-Husayn Mirza (detail).
Herat, c. 1492-93

built out of sincere motives, is known as *Ikhlasīyah*, "Sincerity." In front of this madrasa, on the southern side, has been built the public road of a khanaqah, in which, for the duration of the present government, every day food is distributed to the poor and destitute, and a yearly pension is granted to the destitute.¹²

The placement of the *Ikhlasīyya* north of Herat underscores an important shift in the capital's development, which occurred during the second half of the fifteenth century. With the completion during Abu-Sa'id's reign of the Juy-i Sultan (Imperial Canal), a major irrigation canal north of the city, the area stretching from Herat's walls northeast to the slopes of Gazargah became inhabitable for a relatively large number of people.¹³ Thus under Sultan-Husayn the dynasty's leading nobles constructed gardens and pavilions on the outskirts of the city, forming a lush new suburban setting. From the slopes of Gazargah the elite



cat. no. 145

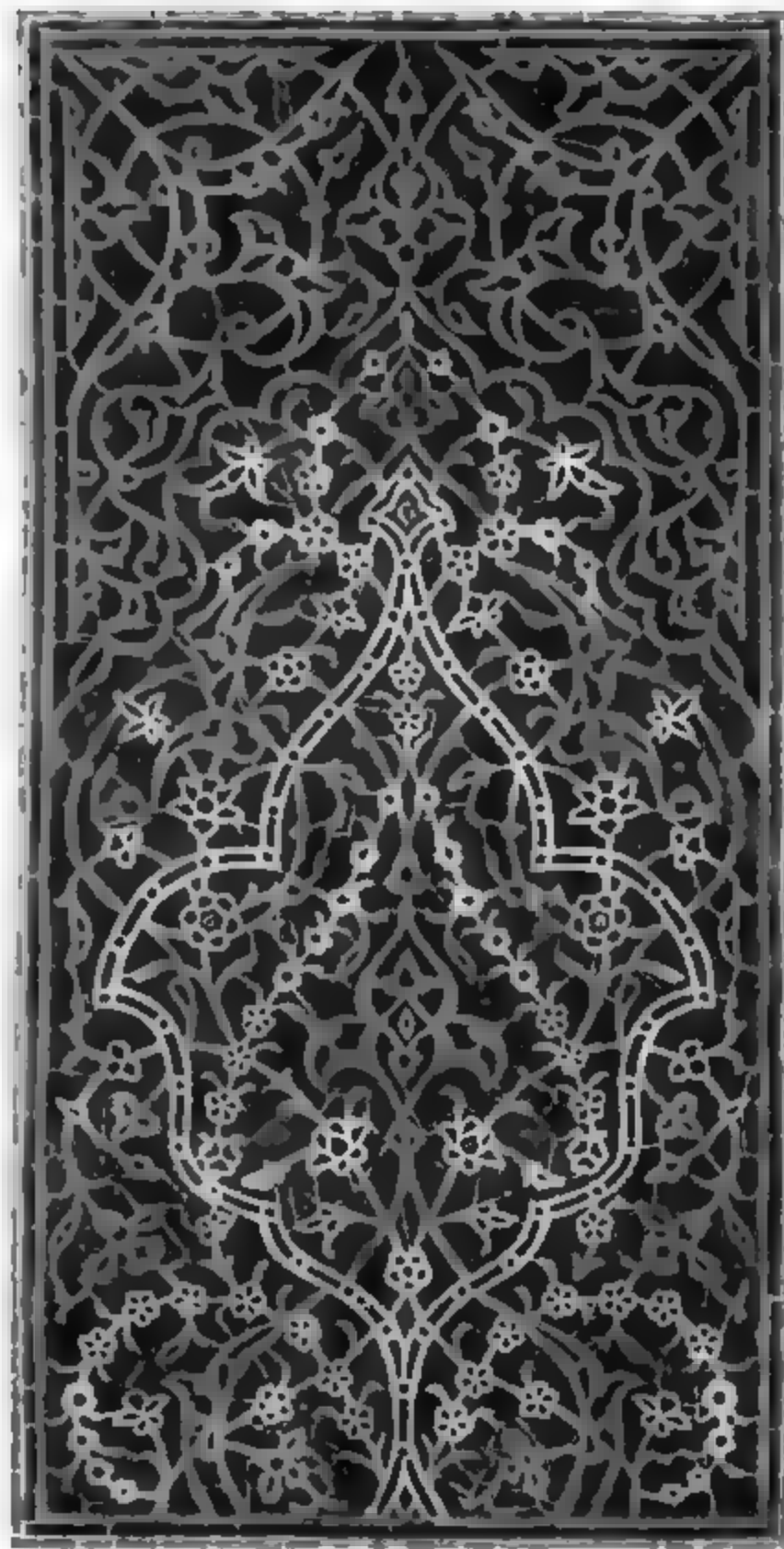
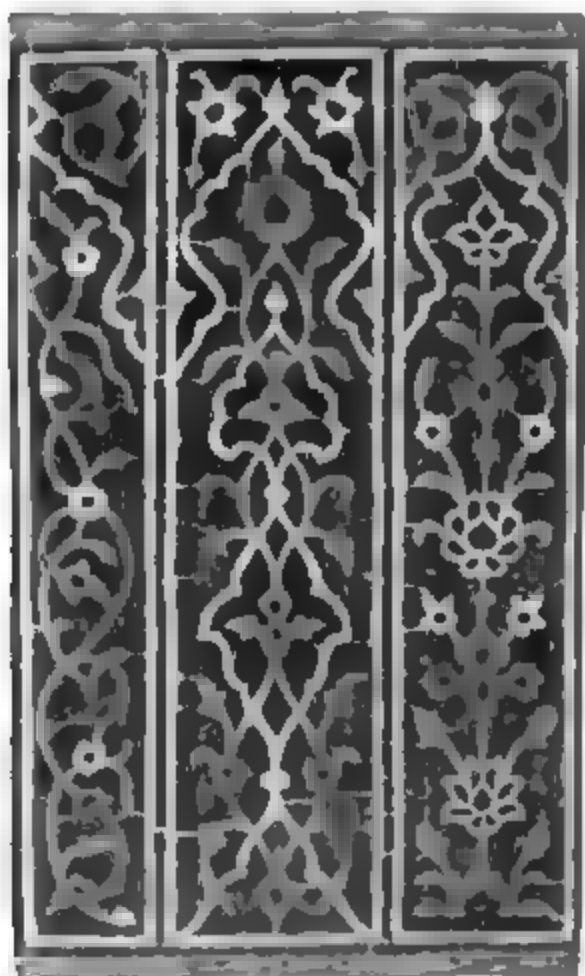
Calligraphic panel
Iran, c. 1500

could look back on a vista of the city that would affirm the dynasty's image of wealth and grandeur. This move toward the suburbs also had a precedent in Timur's seminomadic encampments outside Samarkand and the other cities of his empire.

Few of the court-sponsored buildings of the late fifteenth century survive. From the remaining monuments, however, several trends can be discerned. The decorative schemes executed in tile reflect a marked shift in palette and orientation. The predominantly blue- and green-ground *cuerda seca* tiles of the first part of the century gave way to tiles with bright yellow grounds.¹⁴ A similar process occurred with mosaic faience, as the relatively restricted range of colors used prior to the reign of Shahrukh expanded during the fifteenth century to include aubergine, a variety of light and dark blues, amber, ocher, and rich greens. These new colors were employed in a greater variety of increasingly complex patterns (cat. nos. 143, 144A–B).¹⁵ The tendency toward ever more sophisticated decorative tile schemes is paralleled in architecture by an almost

obsessive interest in intricate, radially symmetrical plans with elaborate entrance complexes, as typified by the early sixteenth-century tomb of Ulugh-Beg ibn Abu-Sa'id and his son Abd al-Razzaq at Ghazni.¹⁶

Although now destroyed, Sultan-Husayn's Bagh-i Jahan Ara (World-Adorning Garden) was one of the most important late Timurid structures. Begun in 1470, the year that Sultan-Husayn took power, the garden was at the heart of the northward expansion of Herat. Built near the site of Sultan-Husayn's birthplace, it contained a number of buildings, including the ruler's residence, a large reservoir, and a *dawlatkhana* (hall of public audience), whose complex plans and shimmering tile facades must have been among the finest achievements of Timurid architecture.¹⁷ The inscriptions for the palace were designed, according to the biographer Qazi Ahmad, by the celebrated late fifteenth-century calligrapher Sultan-Ah Mashhadi. As Sultan-Husayn's principal residence and a potent symbol of his power, the garden served both as the center of government and the site of a variety of formal and semiformal *majlises* (assemblies). In this protected and artificial setting, the ruler amplified and subtly refined his image, modulating perceptions through a



cat. no. 1444

Architectural fragment from the Shrine
of Zayn al-Mulk
Isfahan, dated A.H. 885 (A.D. 1480-81)

cat. no. 1448

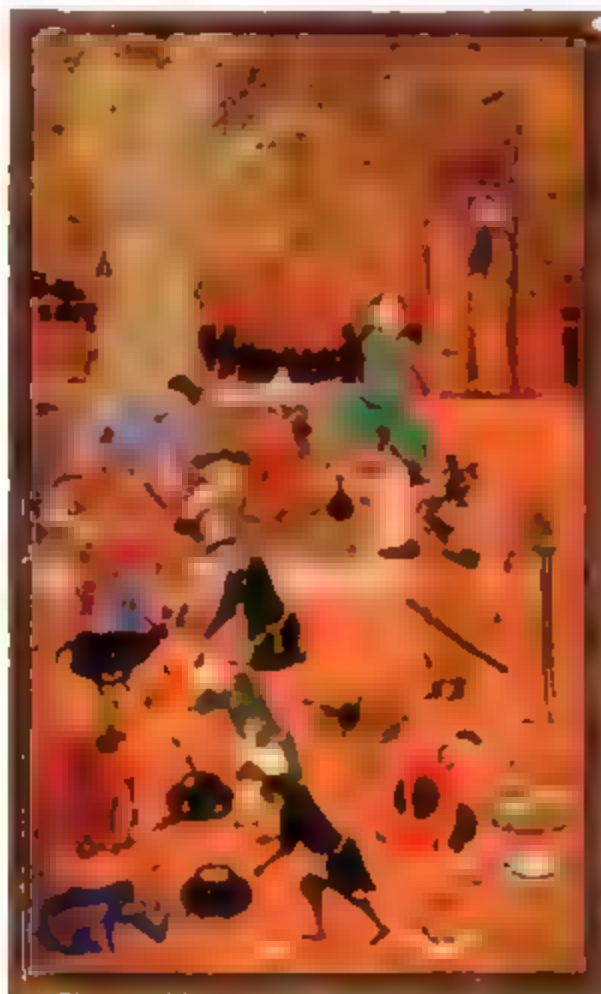
Architectural fragment from the Shrine
of Zayn al-Mulk
Isfahan, dated A.H. 885 (A.D. 1480-81)

carefully contrived use of architecture.

Zaynuddin Wasifi, a minor official and poet who lived in Herat before moving to the Uzbek court at Tashkent after the collapse of the Timurid empire in 1506, left fascinating accounts of these majlises in his autobiography, the *Badayi' al-waqayi'* (Memorable events).³⁸ These assemblies frequently included lavish feasts, musical performances, singing, wine drinking, and the recitation and discussion of poetry and other literary works. Strict codes of behavior governed seat-

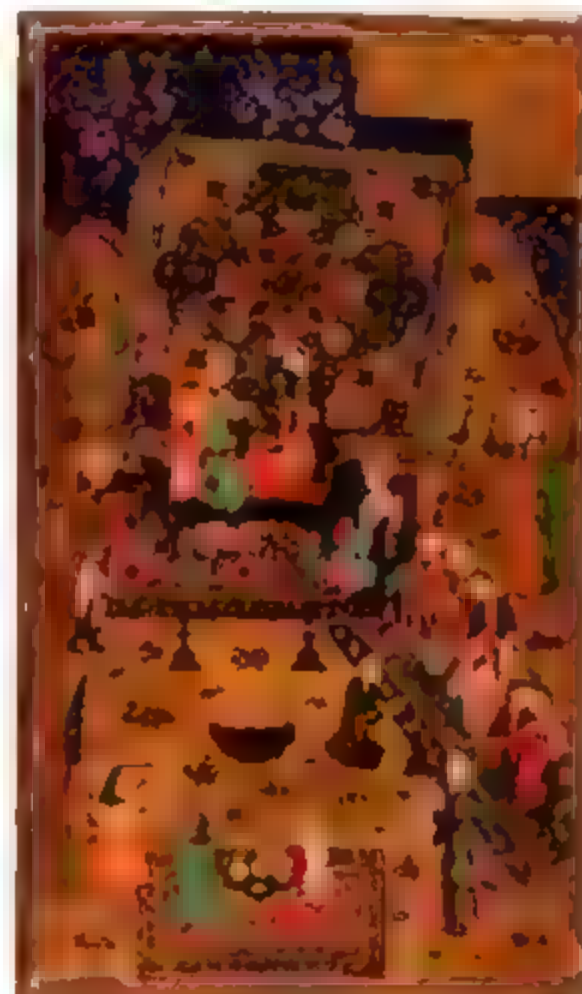
expense for a majlis. The leading singers, musicians, and poets of Herat participated in the event, which took place in a garden in the village of Parzah, just outside of the capital. Carpets and colorful textiles were spread on the ground, and various sherbets and dishes were prepared by one of Sultan-Husayn's chefs (cat. no. 145, ff. 3b–4a).⁴⁰

Conversations at these majlises often consisted of intense debates about the merits of a famous poet or the proper usage of literary conventions. The etiquette



cat. no. 145

"A Garden Feast," from a *Khamsa* of Nizami, Iran, c. 1490, ff. 3b–4a



ing and how one addressed the other participants. The seat of honor at an assembly was called the *tör* (place of honor); the one of least honor, the *saff-i ni'al* (row of sandals), was the place nearest the door where people removed their shoes before entering. Strict protocol called for those attending to know precisely where they belonged in the social order of the court and to respect that position by acting accordingly.³⁹

At one such gathering Majduddin Muhammad, one of Sultan-Husayn's viziers and a rival of Mir Ali-Sher, allegedly spent close to 100,000 *tamghas*, a staggering

of these assemblies was extremely formal, and the participants had to adhere to the rigid requirements of a highly self-conscious court. Those invited were expected to be thoroughly versed in the nuances of Persian literature and capable of witticisms concerning any aspect of this tradition. Criticisms and frequently devastating personal attacks were veiled in allusions, intricate puns, and sly asides. For instance, at one gathering the dull-witted courtier Sadruddin Yunus was humiliated when he failed to understand one of Mir Ali-Sher's jokes:

One day, Mir Damad was seated at the Mir's (Mir Ali-Sher) *majlis* at the very front of the audience chamber and was showing off his literary attainments. Suddenly, a strong wind, reminiscent of the loud talk of the afore-mentioned Mir (Damad), started blowing and slamming the panels of the door together. His Excellency the Mir became vexed and said to Sadr al-Din [Sadraddin] Yunus, "Would you be so kind as to bolt the door?" [Sadraddin Yunus] got up immediately and put his hand to the lock, but the Mir said, "I meant bolt it from the other side."⁴¹

Reputations were often made and lost at these events, particularly those presided over by Mir Ali-Sher, whose *majlises* were considered the most exclusive. Described as an extremely "touchy" man, he was also a brilliant literary critic and poet who gathered around him the most talented poets of the realm. At his assemblies many of the themes and issues that shaped the Timurids' cultural life during the last decades of the fifteenth century were articulated.

The increased emphasis on aggrandizing ceremony and complicated, self-conscious court ritual can be seen in the frontispieces to several late fifteenth-century illustrated manuscripts. The *Bustan* of Sa'di (cat. no. 146, ff. 1b–2a), copied by Sultan-Ali Mashhadi for Sultan-Husayn in 1488, and the *Khamsa* of Nizami (cat. no. 145, ff. 3b–4a), illustrated around 1490, for instance, have elaborate double-page paintings that depict sumptuous garden feasts set within richly ornamented architectural compositions. While these images are related to earlier fifteenth-century frontispieces that portray enthroned rulers surrounded by attendants, both the level of their detail and their focus on drinking, entertainment, and the preparation of food are significant departures from such conventional models as the frontispiece painting in the *Kalila u Dimna*, copied for Baysunghur and dated 1429 (cat. no. 21, ff. 1b–2a). Furthermore the hieratic, formal compositions of these earlier works, with their frozen figures and cold, crystalline colors, has been replaced by more open compositions articulated in warm, almost earthy colors, that stress the interaction, rather than the isolation, of the figures portrayed. The festive atmosphere depicted in these scenes is found in many other paintings made for Sultan-Husayn, including the double-

page painting of the ruler in a blossoming garden surrounded by his ladies and the elaborate scene of the sultan enthroned that may depict his coronation in the Bagh-i Zaghan in 1470.⁴²

During the late fifteenth century the dynasty's cultural life was also affected by several other trends that had implications for the visual arts. Among the most important of these were a conscious affirmation of Timurid charisma through overt references to the founder of the dynasty, a resurgence of interest in Turkic values and literature, a taste for the intricate,⁴³ a heightened awareness of individual artists, an almost compulsive tendency to borrow from past compositions, an emphasis on portraying everyday activities, and a fascination with Sufism.

With the dissolution of Timurid authority after Shahrugh's death the need to establish a symbolic relationship to Timur became critical for any prince seeking to claim the right to rule. Given the dynasty's weakened political and military position, the Timurid princes sought to project a contemporary image of power by affirming their glorious past. None of these princes had actually known Timur—more than fifty years had passed since his death—but they desired to exploit the myth of his power and gain legitimacy by evoking his name.

Abu-Sa'id's effort to associate himself with Timur took a number of forms. Following Ulugh-Beg's example, he adopted the title *küragan*, thus cleverly conjuring up both the specter of the great warlord and through him the dynasty's Chingizid associations. He also built a large residence, which he called the Aq Saray (White Palace),⁴⁴ an allusion to Timur's enormous palace at Shahr-i Sabz.

Sultan-Husayn similarly took steps to identify himself with the dynasty's founder. For instance, during his rule an Uighur and Arabic genealogy (fig. 37), written for Timur's grandson Khalil-Sultan, was continued by inserting, albeit crudely, the members of Sultan-Husayn's family line into the document. This reorienta-

OVERLEAF
cat. no. 146

"A Party at the Court of Sultan
Husayn Mirza"
From a *Bustan* of Sa'di
Herat, dated A.H. Rajab 894
(A.D. June 1488)
ff. 1b–2a





tion of the structure of the genealogy helped establish the superiority of his great-grandfather Umar-Shaykh's line of descent over that of Timur's other sons, thus positioning Sultan-Husayn as the rightful heir to the great warlord's throne.

The copying and illustration of Nizamuddin Shami's and Sharafuddin Yazdi's versions of the *Zafarnama* (The book of conquest), however, gave the myth of Timur its most potent form. At least six copies of Shami's text and thirty of Yazdi's were commissioned between Timur's death and the sack of Herat by the Uzbeks in 1506,⁴⁵ making the *Zafarnama* one of the more popular manuscripts of the fifteenth century. Yazdi's text in particular was used as a vehicle for expounding and reinforcing the dynasty's official portrayal of the great warlord. Through the suppression of certain details and the emphasis of others, Yazdi made the exploitation of Timur's legacy expedient for his heirs, especially those descended from Shahrukh. The *Zafarnama*'s image of Timur was not fixed but susceptible to subtle manipulation by the dynasty's ruling elite throughout the fifteenth century. On the eve of Sultan-Husayn's conquest of Herat in 1470, for instance, the prince commissioned a new copy of the manuscript, to which six double-page paintings attributable to the artist Bihzad were added later, around 1480 (cat. no. 147, ff. 282b–283a). In choosing to illustrate the text, Sultan-Husayn may have been responding to Ibrahim-Sultan's copy of the *Zafarnama*, the only other extant fifteenth-century version to contain paintings, which appears to have been in his possession as early as 1480.⁴⁶

Sultan-Husayn's copy of the manuscript differs from Ibrahim-Sultan's in two important ways: it contains far fewer paintings and has a different illustrative program. By reducing the number of images used to illustrate the text and using only double-page compositions, each painting is charged with a far greater significance than in the earlier manuscript. These illustrations, moreover, are confined to very specific events:

Timur granting an audience in Balkh on the occasion of his accession to power in April 1370;

The troops of Timur commanded by Umar-Shaykh attacking the city of Urgench in the spring of 1379;

Umar-Shaykh outwitting Ankatura in a night encounter on the Jaxartes River in 1388;

The Timurid army attacks the survivors of the town of Nerges in Georgia in the spring of 1396;

The construction of the Masjid-i Jami' in Samarqand in May 1399;

Timur and his army storming the castle of the Knights of Saint John in Izmir on December 2, 1402.

Only one of these illustrations, "Timur Granting an Audience in Balkh on the Occasion of His Accession" (cat. no. 147, ff. 82b–83a), is contained in Ibrahim-Sultan's copy of the *Zafarnama* (fig. 38). More importantly the inclusion of two scenes depicting Umar-Shaykh in a heroic role analogous to that of Timur subtly shifted the earlier Shahrukhid focus of the manuscript to Sultan-Husayn's line. In doing so, these images symbolically laid forth Sultan-Husayn's claim to the lands beyond the borders of Khurasan that he maintained were rightfully part of his great-grandfather's appanage.⁴⁷ The scenes of Timur's assumption of power at Balkh and the construction of his masjid-i jami' at Samarqand may symbolically presage Sultan-Husayn's own accession to the throne and religiously oriented building campaigns. These paintings established a precedent for his own actions as well as defining his role as the upholder of the shari'a. The image of Timur presented in Sultan-Husayn's copy of the *Zafarnama* was thus altered to meet the prince's specific needs.

At the same time that Sultan-Husayn was reformulating the legacy of Timur, there was a resurgence of Turkic culture at his court. The principle exponent of this revival was Mir Ali-Sher, whose treatise on Turki and Persian is a carefully crafted exercise in cultural reorientation. Completed in 1499, little more than a year before his death, Mir Ali-Sher's *Muhakamat al-lughatayn* (Judgment of two languages) is divided into two parts. In the first he tries to prove Turki a superior literary language to Persian, while in the second he analyzes his own works (in glowing terms) to show that his championing of Turki is based on a thorough knowledge of both languages.

Mir Ali-Sher's arguments are not only intended to demonstrate the merits of Turki over Persian but by extension to show the cultural and ethnic superiority of the Turks, who formed the military elite of the dynasty. For instance, he wrote, "It is well known that Turkish is a more intelligent, more understandable, and

more creative language than Persian, while Persian is more refined and profound than Turkish for the purpose of thought and science. That this is so is apparent from the rectitude, honesty, and generosity of the Turks, and the arts, sciences, and philosophy of the Persians."⁴²

Mir Ali-Sher then maintains that the Turki vocabulary is richer than its Persian counterpart and consequently a more interesting and complex language. Ironically, all of his arguments are phrased within the conventional idioms of Persian literature. Both the grammar and presentation of the *Muhakamat al-lughatayn*, as well as his other works written in Turki, are entirely dependent on Persian for their structure as well as their details: they are Turki in vocabulary only. For instance, his quintet of poems in Turki (*Hayrat al-abrar* [Perplexity of the pious], *Farhad u Shirin* [Farhad and Shirin], *Sab'a-i sayyara* [Seven planets], *Sadd-i Iskandar* [Story of Iskandar], *Layla u Majnun* [Layla and Majnun]) is clearly modeled on the *Khamisa* of Nizami, one of the celebrated standard works of Persian literature. Even the paintings in a copy of these poems made for Sultan-Husayn's son Badi'uzzaman Mirza (d. 1514) in 1485 (fig. 93) closely follow the conventions of Persian painting established during the first half of the fifteenth century. Except for the text that they illustrate, they are indistinguishable from other contemporary images, for no clearly identifiable "Turkic" painting was developed to accompany this new literary interest.

To demonstrate the extent to which Turki was used as a literary language and consequently its importance, Mir Ali-Sher concludes his treatise with a review of Sultan-Husayn's poems that states, "He writes and speaks Persian and Turkish with equal skill and facility, but he has preferred to write his *Diwan* in Turkish because of the influence of his essential nature [his being Turkish] and because of the expressiveness of Turkish."⁴³ At least one late fifteenth-century copy of the *Diwan* of Sultan-Husayn has survived (cat. nos. 148–49), though its pages are now widely dispersed. Its finely shaped letters are not written in ink but have been cut from colored papers and pasted onto the pages of the manuscript in a highly demanding technique known as *qut'a* (decoupage). Like Mir Ali-Sher's works, this one is Turki in vocabulary only; its form, grammar, and even the illuminations are typical of Persian literary and artistic conventions.



fig. 93

"Khawja Abdullah Amari and His Disciples"
From a *Hayrat al-abrar* of Mir Ali-Sher
Nawaz
Herat, dated A.H. 890 (A.D. 1485)
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
14 x 10.5 cm (5 1/2 x 4 in.)
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Elliot
187, f. 24a

OVERLEAF
cat. no. 147

"Timur Granting an Audience in Balkh
on the Occasion of His Accession to
Power in April 1370"
From a *Zafarnama* of Sharafuddin
Ali Yazdi
Herat (?), dated A.H. 872 (A.D. 1467–68)
ff. 82b–83a

PLATE 266–67
cat. no. 147

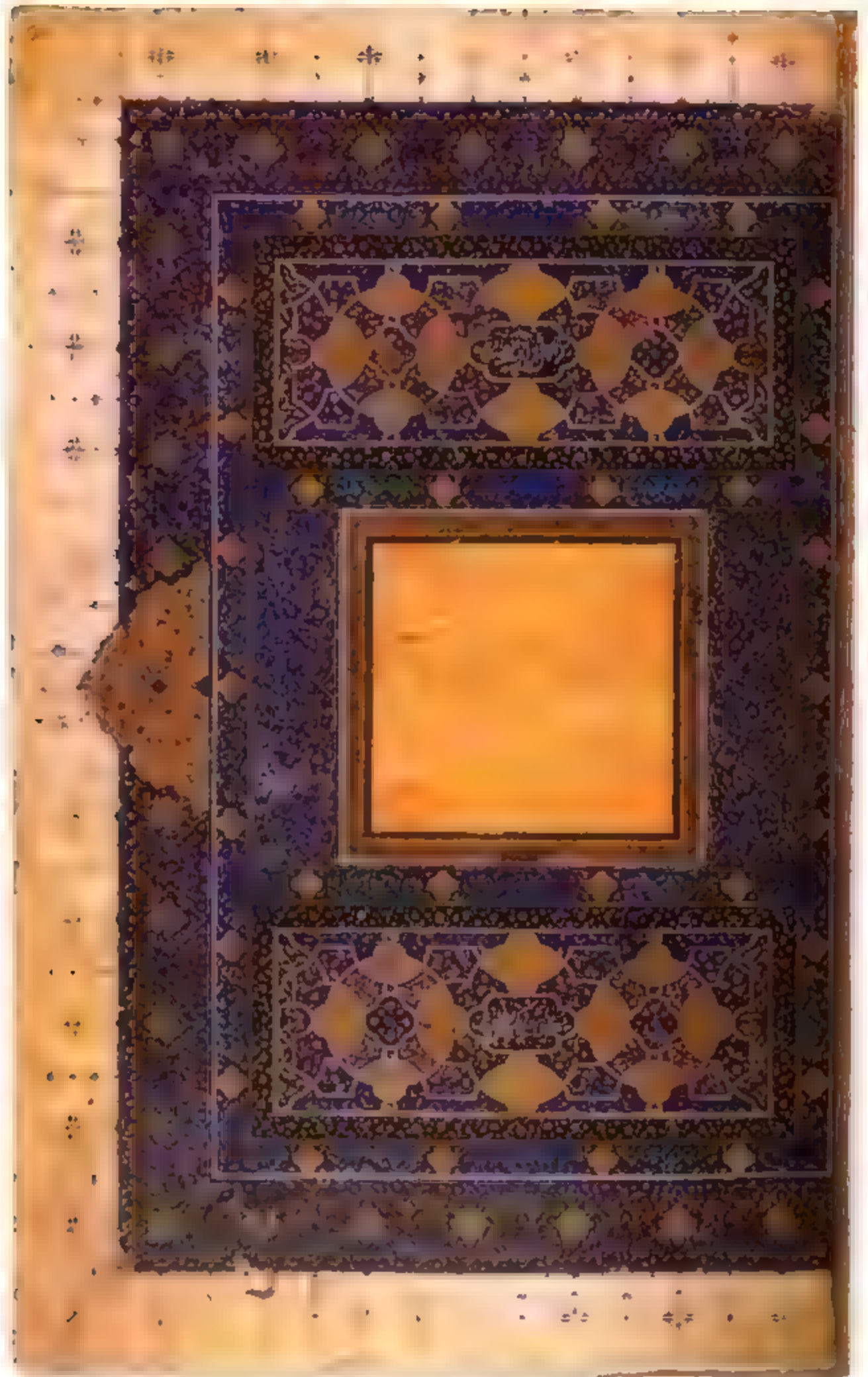
"The Timurid Army Attacks the
Survivors of the Town of Nerges in
Georgia"
From a *Zafarnama* of Sharafuddin
Ali Yazdi
Herat (?), dated A.H. 872 (A.D. 1467–68)
ff. 282b–283a







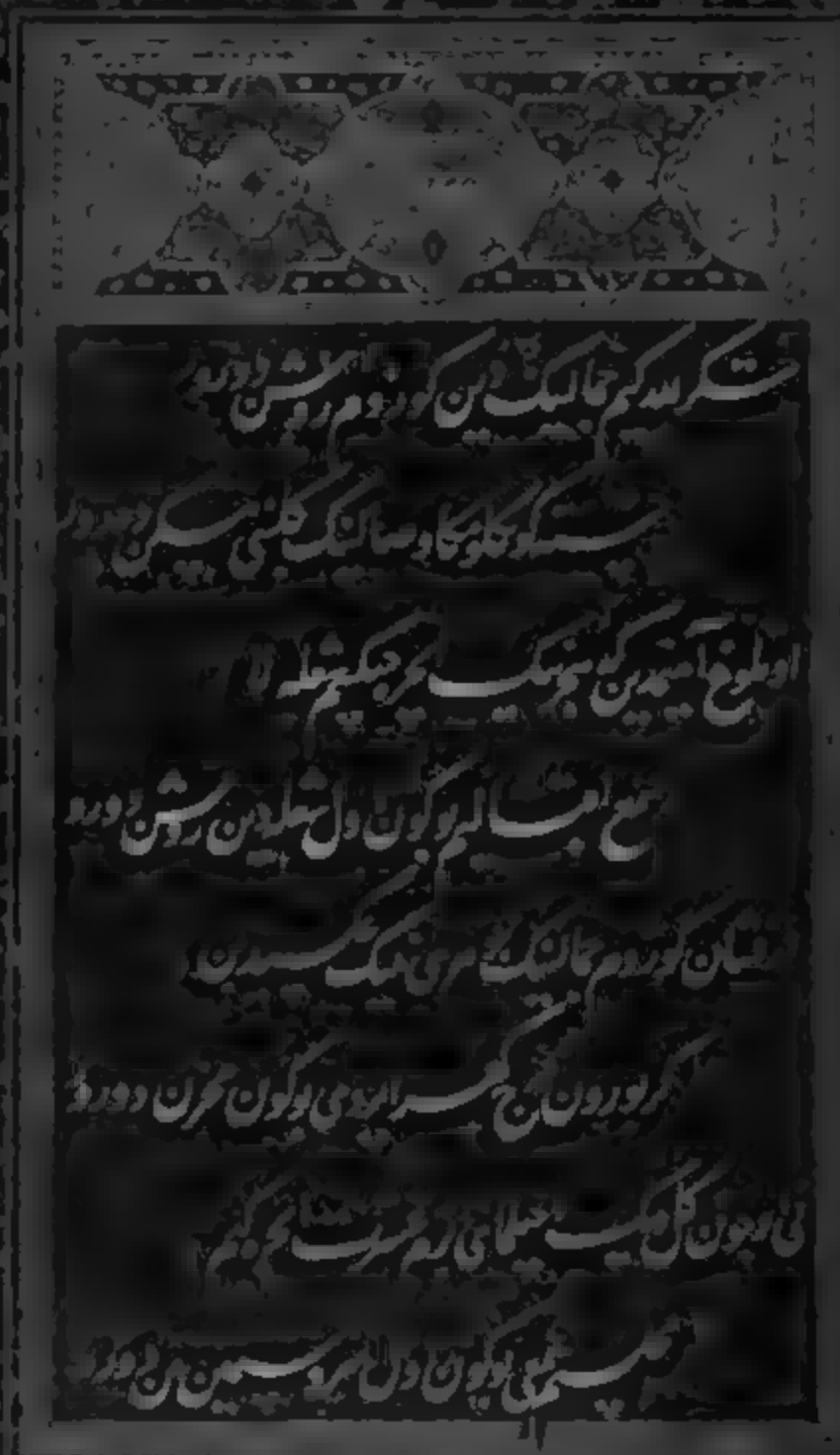






cat. no. 148

Illuminated frontispiece from a *Dīwan*
of Sultan-Husayn Mirza
Herat? c. 1490
H 1b 2a



Given the overwhelming force of Persian as the dynasty's formal means of literary expression, it is possible to dismiss the use of Turki as a literary conceit. By consciously choosing to write in this language, however, Mir Ali-Sher and Sultan-Husayn, among others, evoked a series of Turkic associations with political, cultural, and social implications. These associations can be traced to the beginning of Timurid power, when Turki was the predominant language of the dynasty. Used both as a poetic medium and for official purposes, Turki was elevated to a major means of expression by the Timurid elite at an early period. Although its use was more sporadic during the second and third quarters of the fifteenth century, it continued as an important language in certain circles and was never fully supplanted by Persian among the Timurid princes. Timur's proclamation against Toqtamish, for example, was written in Turki in Uighur script, and the celebrated poet Mawlana Haydar, who worked for Iskandar-Sultan, composed several poems in Turki, including an imitation of Nizami's famous *Makhzan al-astar*. Turki was also used on occasion for official documents such as soyurghala.⁵⁰ By the end of the century, according to Mir Ali-Sher, as much as 10 percent of the poetry written at Sultan-Husayn's court was in Turki.⁵¹

The use of Turki at Sultan-Husayn's court can thus be seen as an attempt to evoke the glory days of the dynasty's Turkic past with its military and tribal connotations. Although ultimately only a fiction, the powerful evocation of the dynasty's early might and charisma maintained the memory of Timur's legacy while reinforcing the facade of Sultan-Husayn's highly refined but politically weakened court.

The need to practice and emphasize the language of their ancestors was also a reaction to the almost total assimilation of the Timurid court into the Persianate cultural complex by the late fifteenth century. Mir Ali-Sher's demonstration that Turki was a viable mode of expression may, therefore, be likened to the enshrinement of a potent memory, a reminder to the dynasty's ruling elite of the importance of their Turkic origins. Sultan-Husayn recognized the significance of Mir Ali-

Sher's efforts with Turki and praised this aspect of his work, as opposed to his economic or architectural achievements, in his "Apologia":

Until today no one has clothed those virgins of meaning with a Turkish garb, and these musk-scented elegantes have remained veiled in their nakedness in the oblivion of poetical talent . . . until this auspicious time, when one of my vassals and servants, who has attained the grade of *kukältashliq* (foster brother) and accumulated the capital of companionship through the road of loyal service . . . by whom I mean Mir Ali-Sher, who is known by his nom de plume Nawa'i, and in whose [melodious] poetry this nom de plume is implicit. He has infused life into the dead body of the Turkish language with his messianic breath. He has clothed those revived ones with embroidery and silks, woven with a Turkic warp and woof.⁵²

Despite these efforts the traditions of urban-oriented Iranian culture dominated Sultan-Husayn's court. Both he and Mir Ali-Sher surrounded themselves with poets and artists steeped in Persianate practices just as Shahrukh and his sons had. In words reminiscent of the praise of Baysunghur's patronage contemporary writers lauded Mir Ali-Sher: "So many matchless and excellent calligraphers, singers, musicians, painters, gilders, artists, writers, composers of mu'amma and poets thrived under [Mir Ali-Sher's] patronage that it is not known whether (as many) have ever appeared at any other time."⁵³

The cultural prestige acquired through patronage of the arts affirmed Sultan-Husayn's rule, and the ruling house continued its long-standing policy of using aesthetics to legitimate authority. The *Rawzat al-safa* (Garden of purity) of Mirkhwand, which was composed at Sultan-Husayn's court, used the same historiographic techniques as the *Majma' al-tawarikh* of Hafiz-i Abru and other earlier Timurid histories to position the dynasty as rightful rulers within the broader context of Islamic kingship.

The presence of Abdul-Rahman Jami also added prestige to Sultan-Husayn's court. The leader of the Naqshbandi Sufi order in Herat, Jami was a man of great talent and influence whose considerable wealth and authority enabled him to be on intimate terms with Sultan-Husayn and Mir Ali-Sher while preserving

cat. no. 149

Folio of poetry from a *Diwan* of Sultan-Husayn Mirza Herat¹⁵, c. 1490



cat. no. 150

Wine cup

Herat, dated A.H. 874 (A.D. 1470–71)

his independence.¹⁴ As the foremost poet in the eastern Islamic world and the last great exponent of traditional Persian poetry, Jami was a critical factor in establishing the Timurids' aura of sophistication at the end of the fifteenth century.

Reflective of the poet's role in Timurid cultural designs were the many sumptuous court objects, such as the striped agate bowl, dated 1470–71 (cat. no. 150), and the brass jug inlaid with silver and gold, dated 1498 (cat. no. 151) made for Sultan-Husayn and his leading courtiers. In a significant departure from earlier wares, which are inscribed primarily in Arabic, many of these objects are inscribed with verses in Persian. The poetry of Jami and the fourteenth-century author Hafiz was a particularly popular source for these inscriptions.¹⁵

With their simple shapes and richly decorated surfaces, frequently inlaid with fine silver and gold wire, these works helped to create the same sense of luxury that characterized previous Timurid courts (cat. no. 152). By using globular jugs based on earlier jade models, such as those inscribed with Ulugh-Beg's name, Sultan-Husayn and his courtiers visually linked their court life to an earlier, more powerful phase in the dynasty's life. The objects made for the Timurid elite at the end of the century, however, were much smaller and more finely worked than those of the first years of the century. Intricate designs and extraordinarily refined craftsmanship replaced the more sensational objects associated with Timur and his court.

The new aesthetic interests of the late Timurids had profound consequences in all media but most noticeably in painting and poetry. The inherently formal qualities of Persian visual production and literature were fully exploited in technical displays of remarkable complexity. An important consequence of this new interest was a tendency in the finest manuscripts of the period to contain only a restricted number of extremely fine paintings. This shift to a reduced number of paintings, each of extremely high quality, resulted in the



cat. no. 151

Jug
Herat(?), dated A.H. middle of Sha'ban
903 (A.D. 11 April 1498)

271



cat. no. 152

Jug
Herat(?), dated A.H. 901 (A.D. 1495)



cat. no. 140

"Layla and Majnun Fainting"
From a *Khamsa* of Nizami
Herat (?), dated A.H. 907–51/1494–95
f. 137b

enhanced importance of intricate images, which came to be viewed as individual paintings rather than illustrations. This development, in turn, led to the increased popularity of albums, which included a variety of paintings and calligraphic specimens.

While late fifteenth-century Timurid images appear very different from the dynasty's earlier works, there is a significant element of continuity between the two. The paintings that illustrate the manuscripts made for Sultan-Husayn and his courtiers rely extensively on compositions found in previous Timurid manuscripts. Sometimes the artists appropriated whole scenes as well as details ranging from a tree or cluster of rocks to individual figures or groups of figures.¹⁶ Knowledge of these images was made possible by the Timurid *kitabkhana* system, which preserved the visual and literary records of the past. The drawings, manuscripts, and pounces contained in Sultan-Husayn's and his courtiers' *kitabkhanas* provided artists with a wealth of information that allowed them to borrow freely from earlier moments in the dynasty's artistic history. All of these ateliers adhered to a single carefully constructed princely vision, using the same visual and literary resources for their articulation.

One can see numerous examples of this repetition (see Appendix III). The illustrations "Layla and Majnun Fainting" and "Bathing Maidens Observed by the Eavesdropping Master" (cat. no. 140, ff. 137b, 190a) from a *Khamsa* of Nizami made for Amir Ali Farsi Barlas in 1494–95 are typical of this process. The former is identical to the same scene from a *Khamsa* of Nizami copied in 1445–46 (Appendix III, no. 5),¹⁷ while the latter is an extremely close, reversed copy from a manuscript of Nizami's *Haft paykar* (Seven portraits, c. 1430–40; fig. 94), which is based on even earlier models. Other paintings in Amir Ali Farsi's manuscript are derived from compositions that first appeared in Iskandar-Sultan's *Anthology* (cat. no. 35), including "The Mi'raj of the Prophet," "Shirin Views Khusraw's Portrait," and "Iskandar Visiting the Hermit" (cat. no. 140, ff. 3b, 39b, 273a).¹⁸ Similarly the general organization and several of the vignettes in the double-page hunting scene from the *Hasht bihisht* (Eight paradises) of Amir Khusraw dated 1496–97 (fig. 95) are derived from the frontispiece to the *Shahnama* copied for Baysunghur in 1430 (fig. 42).

The use of discrete elements appropriated from



cat. no. 140

"Bathing Maidens Observed by the
Eavesdropping Master"
From a *khamsa* of Nizami
Herat (?), dated A.H. 900 (A.D. 1494-95)
c. 1904



fig. 94

"Bathing Maidens Observed by the
Eavesdropping Master"
From a *khamsa* of Nizami
Herat ?, c. 1425-50
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
25.2 x 13 cm (9 7/8 x 5 1/8 in.)
New York, The Metropolitan Museum
of Art, gift of Alexander Smith
Cochran, 1919, 15.228.55, 6.478



cat. no. 140

"The Miraj of the Prophet"
From a Khamsa of Nizami

Herat, dated A.H. 900 (A.D. 1494-95)
f. 15b

cat. no. 140

"Shirin Views Khusraw's Portrait"
From a Khamsa of Nizami

Herat (?), dated A.H. 900 (A.D. 1494-95)
f. 15b



earlier sources to compose new scenes is even more common. For instance, "The Beggar before the King" (cat. no. 153), an illustration from a copy of the *Mantiq al-tayr* (Discourse of the birds) of Attar completed at Herat in 1483, consists of several borrowed figures from earlier Timurid works. The enthroned ruler seated on a dais, one hand on his knee and the other outstretched, is derived from similar depictions of kings, such as those in the *Shahnama* copied for Bay-sunghur in 1430. The figure in a red robe to the right of the ruler is based on the courtier in the upper left of the painting of "Sam Receiving Rustam's Portrait" from the *Shahnama* copied for Muhammad-Juki around 1440.¹⁹

Even paintings that appear to be composed of carefully observed details from life are usually pastiches of elements from other paintings. The sleeping mendicant in "The Shaykh of Mehna and the Villager" (cat. no. 154) from the 1483 *Mantiq al-tayr*, for example, is based on a figure from an earlier Chinese painting or drawing. A similar fifteenth-century copy is now in the H.2160 album in the Topkapı Sarayı Museum (fig. 96).

The reliance of so many late fifteenth-century paint-

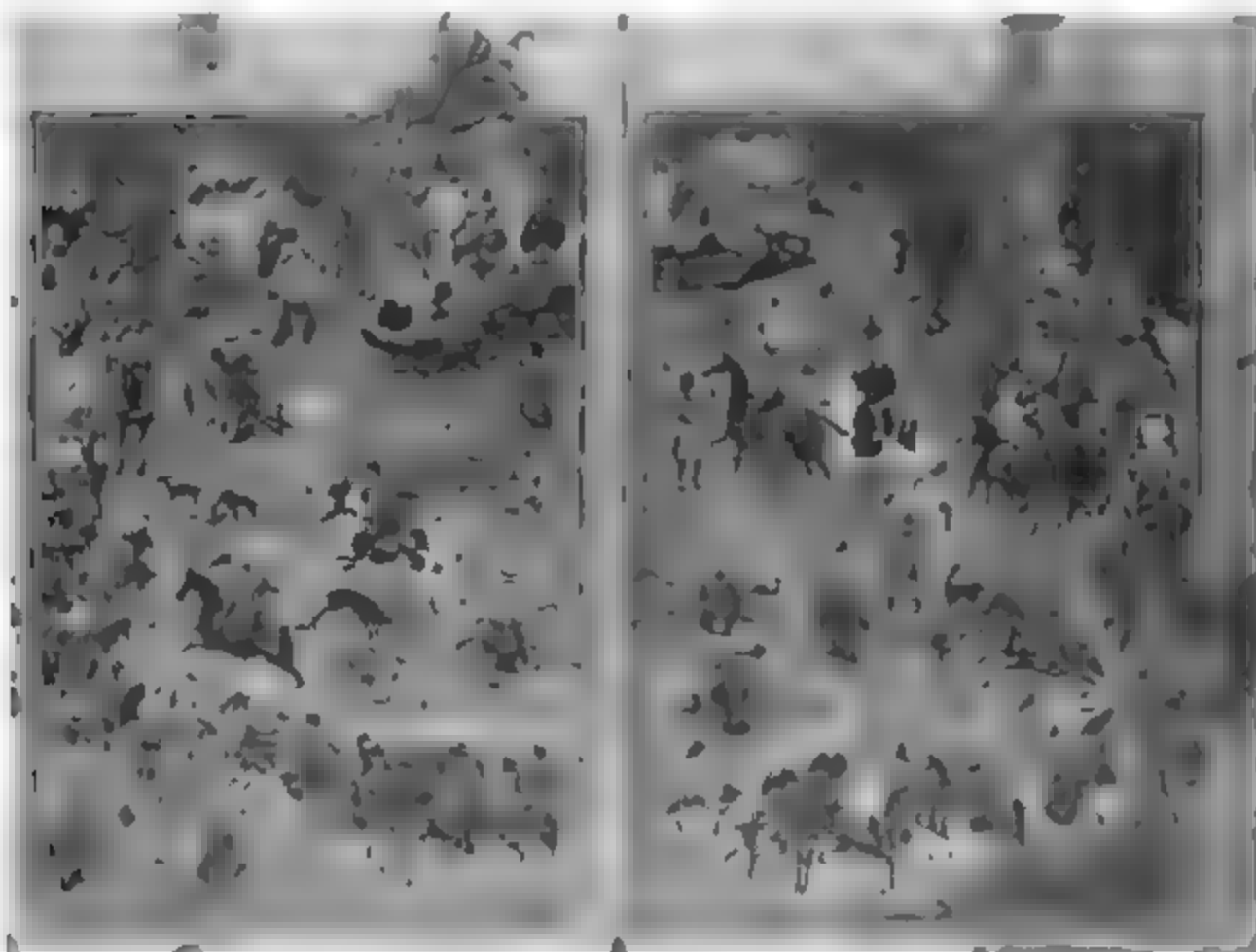


fig. 95

Frontispiece from a *Hasht bihasht* of Amir Khusraw Dihlawi Herat(?), dated A.H. 902 (A.D. 1496-97)
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
38 x 26 cm (15 x 10 1/4 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, H.676, N. 1b-2a

cat. no. 153 (opposite)
"The Beggar before the King"
From a *Mantiq al-tayr* of Attar
Herat, dated A.H. 888 (A.D. 1483)





Fig. 94
 "Sleepers"
 Iran or Central Asia, fifteenth century
 Opaque watercolor on paper
 50.6 x 50.5 cm (20 x 20 in.)
 Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
 H.1160. f. 48b



cat. no. 154
 "The Shaykh of Mechna and the
 Villager"
 From a *Masnavi al-Tayr* of Attar
 Herat, dated A.H. 888 (A.D. 1483).

ings on compositions and figures first articulated in the manuscripts made for members of Shahrūkh's court reflects the importance of the canon of imperial imagery established by the princely network that operated during the first half of the fifteenth century. By recalling these images either in part or in whole, the artists of Sultan-Husayn's time imbued their paintings with the sense of power and splendor associated with the paintings of this earlier, more forceful Timurid reign.

This tendency to repeat a relatively small set of standard compositions from scene to scene and from one manuscript to the next follows the pattern established during Shahrūkh's reign. However, by the end of the fifteenth century this process had become so convoluted and widespread that it was almost an end in itself. For instance, the pavilion, figures, and central carpet that form the basic components of "Khwaja Abdullah Ansari and His Disciples" (fig. 93) from the *Khamsa* of Mir Ali-Sher (1485) are used to create at least two other paintings: "A Master and His Disciples" (c. 1490; cat. no. 155) and "Precepts for Khizr" from the *Layla u Majnun* of Amir Khusraw Dihlawi (c. 1500), now in the Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library.⁶⁰

Countless other compositions were treated in a similar fashion. "Bahram Gur and the Dragon" (cat. no. 145, f. 161a) from a *Khamsa* of Nizami that was completed in 1442 but had fourteen paintings added around 1490 is almost identical to a scene (cat. no. 140, f. 157a) from a *Khamsa* of Nizami dated 1494–95. "The Beggar before the King" (cat. no. 153) from the 1483 *Mantiq al-tayr* bears a strong resemblance to "The Elders Pleading before Hurmuzd on Behalf of Khusraw" (cat. no. 140, f. 37b) from the *Khamsa* of Nizami copied for Amir Ali Farsi Barlas.

The process involved in creating these images was one of repetition and refinement, modification and embellishment. Through the manipulation of minor details, such as the color of the carpets or the shape of the tree in the various versions of "Khwaja Abdullah Ansari and His Disciples," generic compositions were given individual features. While the impact of earlier fifteenth-century paintings was primarily a function of their brilliant colors, inventive compositions, and highly controlled lines, appreciation of these later images depended on the viewer's familiarity with their iconographic sources: late Timurid manuscript painting often required a connoisseur's knowledge of past



cat. no. 155

"A Master and His Disciples"
from a *Khamsa* manuscript
Herat? c. 1490



cat. no. 145

"Bahram Gur and the Dragon"
From a *Khamsa* of Nizami
Iran, c. 1490
f. 161a



cat. no. 146

"Bahram Gur and the Dragon"
From a *Khamsa* of Nizami
Herat?, dated A.H. 900
(A.D. 1494-95)
E. 157a

cat. no. 140

"The Elders Pleading before Hormuzd
on Behalf of Khusrav"
From a *Khamsa* of Nizami
Herat?, dated A.H. 900
A.D. 1494-95
E. 157b



forms and an ability to respond to subtle references to other paintings.

This interest in the rhetorical elaboration of repeated patterns is paralleled in contemporary poetry, which also tended toward imitation and affectation.⁶¹ Poets at Sultan-Husayn's and Mir Ali-Sher's courts were expected to be thoroughly acquainted with the works of past masters as well as their most illustrious peers. Mir Ali-Sher, the champion of Turki, claimed to have memorized fifty thousand couplets of Persian poetry in addition to most of the works of Jami, while the poet Hilali (d. 1529/30) knew by heart as many as forty thousand couplets and the majority of both Nizami and Amir Khusraw's *Khamsas*.⁶² Memorization was central to medieval Islamic education; it ensured the transmission of a relatively fixed body of knowledge from generation to generation and guaranteed greater familiarity with the standard texts of Persian literature.

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cat. no. 156

Portrait of Hatifi
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1511-21

In the late fifteenth century poets went beyond mere rhetorical embellishments of past verse and focused on purely technical challenges in ever more dazzling displays of complexity. Often this took the form of complicated puns and elaborate plays on words. Thus Wasifi prided himself on imitating a *qasida* of Katibi composed of two disparate elements, *shutur* (camel) and *hujra* (room), by repeating these words in every hemistich but adding the words *khak* (earth), *ab* (water), *bad* (air), and *atish* (fire) to every line.⁶³ In doing so, Wasifi turned Katibi's poem into a formal exercise in complexity. Other poets, like Jami's nephew Hatifi (cat. no. 156), specialized in writing complete imitations of several of the poems from the *Khamsas* of Nizami and Amir Khusraw. His most celebrated achievement was the composing of a *Timurnama* (History of Timur) in imitation of Amir Khusraw's *Iskandarnama* (History of Alexander), thus casting Timur in the guise of the legendary Alexander the Great.

The practice of composing imitations, parallels, and answers to poems by other poets is characteristic of the dynasty's increasingly narrow focus. The Timurids were obsessed with creating elaborate riddles such as *muwashshahs* (acrostics), *tarikhs* (chronograms), and *mu'ammals* (enigmas). In an acrostic a series of different verse forms are extracted from a single verse by means of various devices, such as grouping all words with common roots or using the first, middle, and last letters of each word of a hemistich to make another set of hemistiches. Chronograms, if slightly less difficult to compose, were equally popular and were used for fixing important dates and events. By adding together the numerical value of the letters of a word (or group of words) based on the Arabic alphabet, a date from the Hijra calendar could be obtained. Sahibdara Astarabadī (d. 1512), for instance, composed an elegy on the death of Mir Ali-Sher in which the first hemistich of each line yielded a chronogram of Nawa'i's birth, while the second hemistich of every line was a chronogram of his death.⁶⁴

Enigmas were the ultimate expression of this preoccupation with verbal acrobatics. Consisting of one or two couplets of poetry, enigmas contained hidden allusions to various letters of the Arabic alphabet that when assembled yielded a proper name or word.⁶⁵ Often these puzzles were so complicated that the solu-

tion was given out before the poem was read, and those present then tried to demonstrate how it was derived. Numerous treatises were written on the composition of these riddles by the leading poets of the late fifteenth century, including Jami, who on the whole disapproved of the affectations inherent in this form.

The ability to solve these puzzles was highly prized at court. Wasifi, who claimed to be an expert on *mu'ammās*, recorded in typically inflated terms how he impressed Mir Ali-Sher at one of the latter's majlis:

When we arrived at the formal audience, all the intimates and boon companions of his excellency the Mir were assembled. His excellency the Mir glanced at us and then pointed to me, saying, "Is this the fellow who solves *mu'ammās* without knowing the solution beforehand?" Mawlana Sahib answered, "Yes, my lord, he is the one." Mawlana Muhammad Badakhshi said, "O lord and sovereign, your ability to solve *mu'ammās* cannot compare with his." The Mir said, "I can see that from his eyes, for in them are evident the signs of a thinker." Then he read me a *mu'amma*. . . . It just so happened that I knew it already. . . . and I said, "My lord, I already know this *mu'amma*." His excellency the Mir lowered his head in thought for a moment and then said, "Friends, do you know the meaning of his words? He is showing his expertise by saying, 'Not this one, give me another one to solve!'"⁶⁶

The visual arts were an integral part of this rarefied atmosphere. Complicated calligraphic techniques like *découpage* and the frequent "quotations" found in paintings provided visual equivalents to the Timurids' verbal and literary interests. Artists, like poets, were expected to know the work of earlier masters and to be able to incorporate minor details and entire compositions from the past. The emphasis on complex "quotations" often transformed the creation of art, like poetry, into a purely formal exercise.

Despite the seemingly mechanical nature of this work late fifteenth-century Timurid artists—for the first time in the dynasty's history—received widespread, personal recognition for their contributions. Paintings were no longer treated as anonymous icons of imperial imagery but were scrutinized for their iconographic sources and personal details. A heightened awareness of the work of individual artists developed



cat. no. 157

"Sa'di and the Youth of Kashgar"
From a *Gulistan* of Sa'di
Herat?, dated 10th Muharram 891
(A.D. January 1486)
f. 152

among the principal patrons of the period. Suddenly—and apparently without precedent—brief biographies of the most celebrated artists were included in contemporary chronicles. Numerous works inscribed with their names—not seen in earlier Timurid works—allow formerly anonymous painters to emerge as distinct personalities. The calligrapher Sultan-Ali Mashhadi and the painter Bihzad are known to have worked on major projects such as Sultan-Husayn's *Gulistan* of Sa'di completed in 1486 (cat. no. 157) and his *Bustan* of Sa'di finished two years later (cat. no. 146). Work from the first decades of the fifteenth century rarely carries such clear and precise attributions.

The most renowned artists of the period include Yari, Shah-Muzaffar, Qasim ibn Ali, Mawlana Mirak Naqqash, and Mawlana Mahmud, but Sultan-Ali and Bihzad are the most frequently cited by contemporary and later chroniclers. While there has been little debate concerning the brilliance of Sultan-Ali's calligraphy, an evaluation of Bihzad, who painted into the sixteenth century and was perceived by later generations to be the Timurid artist par excellence (fig. 97), is more complicated.



cat. no. 146

"A Party at the Court of Sultan
 Husayn Mirza" detail
 from a *Diwan* of Sa'adi
 Herat, dated A.H. Rajab 893
 (A.D. June 1488)
 ff. 2b-2a

Qazı Ahmad, writing at the end of the sixteenth century, elevates Bihzad to the same status as the legendary artist Mani, whom Persian writers usually place at the beginning of the Iranian tradition of painting.⁶⁷ During his lifetime, however, Bihzad was likely seen as only one of many talented artists. The historian and biographer Mirza Muhammad-Haydar Dughlat, for example, does not even begin his description of painters with him, starting instead with Shah-Muzaffar (see p. 169). Indeed, he noted that Bihzad's hand, draftsmanship, and articulation are not as fine as Shah-Muzaffar's. This sentiment is echoed by Babur, who said that Bihzad's work was dainty (cat. no. 158) but that he did not draw bearded faces very well.⁶⁸ The challenge in evaluating the significance of Bihzad's oeuvre, and by extension all late fifteenth-century Timurid painting, lies in distinguishing between the perceptions of his images at Sultan-Husayn's court and the mythologizing of these works that occurred under such later dynasties as the Safavids and the Mughals. This issue is complicated by numerous (often deliberately) erroneous attributions to Bihzad inscribed on Timurid paintings. There are, however, images that are almost certainly by the master, including many in the following manuscripts:

A *Zafarnama* of Yazdı copied by Sher Ali and completed in 1467–68, now in the Milton S. Eisenhower Library, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore;

A *Gulistan* of Sa'di copied by Sultan-Ali al-Katib and completed in January 1486, now in the A. Soudavar Collection;

A *Bustan* of Sa'di copied by Sultan-Ali al-Katib for Sultan-Husayn and completed in June 1488, now in the General Egyptian Book Organization (GEBO), Cairo (Adab Farsi 908);

A *Khamisa* of Nizami copied in 1442 but containing fourteen paintings added to the manuscript around 1490, including one dated 1493, now in the British Library, London (Add.25900);

A *Khamisa* of Nizami copied for Amir Farsi Barlas in 1494–95, now in the British Library, London (Or.6810).⁶⁹

The paintings in these manuscripts attributed to Bihzad are similar to those attributed to Qasim ibn Ali



fig. 97

"Bihzad"
Tahriq(?), c. 1529
Opaque watercolor and ink on paper
11.8 x 7 cm (4 5/8 x 2 3/4 in.)
Iranian University Library, E1422,
f. 12b



cat. no. 158

"Two Seated Men"
Hera(?), c. 1480–90



and Mirak Naqqash among others. While his oeuvre has distinctive traits, it shares features associated with the painting of his time: an interest in portraiture, a heightened sense of naturalism, and more lively compositions that set figures in relatively animated motion. Thus his works can be understood as paradigmatic of the principal directions of late fifteenth-century Timurid painting.

The most striking aspect of the manuscript images created by Bihzad and his peers during Sultan-Husayn's reign is their focus on everyday activities. From the preparation of food (cat. no. 145, ff. 3b–4a) to the construction of buildings (cat. no. 140, f. 154b) and the taking of baths (cat. no. 140, f. 27b) the paintings associated with Bihzad exult in the minutiae of the quotidian. In "Construction of the Masjid-i Jami' in Samarqand" from the *Zafarnama* of 1467–68 (cat. no. 147, ff. 359b–360a) and the "Construction of Khawarnaq" from the *Khamsa* of Nizami dated 1494–95 the actions of the craftsmen are the scenes' primary foci; such an interest would have been inconceivable in earlier Timurid painting.

cat. no. 140 (opposite)

"The Construction of the Palace of Khawarnaq"

From a *Khamsa* of Nizami

Herat(?), dated A.H. 900

(A.D. 1494–95)

f. 154b

cat. no. 147

"Construction of the Masjid-i Jami' in Samarqand"

From a *Zafarnama* of Sharafuddin Ali Yaqub

Herat(?), dated A.H. 872 (A.D. 1467–68)

ff. 359b–360a



cat. no. 142 (opposite)

"Harun al-Rashid and the Barber"

From a *Khamsa* of Nizami

Herat?, dated A.H. 900–A.H. 1494–95

f. 27b

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fig. 98

"The Bearded Man Who Fell into the Water"

From a *Mantiq al-tayr* of Attar

Herat, dated A.H. 888–A.H. 1481

Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper

18.4 x 23 cm (7 1/4 x 9 1/8 in.)

New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1961. 61.210.4

f. 44a

Similarly two illustrations from the 1483 *Mantiq al-tayr*, "The Shaykh of Mehna and the Villager" (cat. no. 154) and "The Bearded Man Who Fell into the Water" (fig. 98), contain vignettes that create the impression of being drawn from life, such as the fruit vendors weighing their melons or the woodcutter strapping faggots to his donkey. The emphasis on the relationship of the figures to one another and the warm palette of browns, reds, light blues, and mauves reinforces this sense of the commonplace and the psychological interplay between the figures.

While earlier Timurid painting presented a facade of forms, late fifteenth-century works create a more personal visual reality and reveal the flexibility of the kitabkhana system. The figures represented are not mere types caught in rigidly choreographed plays but individualized characters engaged in a variety of activities.

This interest in depicting everyday activity in later Timurid painting led artists to create scenes that to contemporary eyes appeared as if they were drawn from life. Wasifi, for instance, records that Bihzad

brought to the paradisaical and heaven adorning majlis of the great emir, Amir Ali Shir (may God refresh his soul!), a painting—a scene from the life of Ali Shir—in which there was (depicted) a blooming garden with many different species of trees with beautiful variegated birds in their branches, while on every side there were flowing streams and blossoming rosebushes. In the midst of this stood the pleasant figure of the Amir leaning on his cane, with plates full of gold in front of him for distribution as gifts.⁷⁰

After examining the painting Mir Ali-Sher turned to his companions and asked them to describe it. Their comments reveal a great deal about contemporary aesthetic concerns:

Mawlana Fasihuddin, who had been the Mir's teacher and who was one of the most eminent men of Khorasan, said, "Master, when I saw those blossoming flowers, I wanted to stretch out my hand, pick one and stick it into my turban."

Mawlana Sahibdara, who was the Mir's companion and friend, said, "I too had the same desire, but (then) it occurred to me that if I stretched out my hand, all the birds would fly off the trees."⁷¹



While Islamic writings on the visual arts stress the importance of being able to paint or draw "realistically," the introduction of a scene apparently taken from life, even if still realized through the use of idealized compositional types, was a significant departure from the standard repertoire of subjects depicted at the Timurid court in the first half of the fifteenth century. The painting's verisimilitude, evoked through motion and space, establishes a temporal context for images that is a radical departure from the iconic stasis of painting under Shahrukh, which emphasizes the eternal rather than the immediate. The deeper, more "three-dimensional" space of many of the paintings made during Sultan-Husayn's reign is consistent with this new interest. By creating an environment in which both figures and objects could be seen as distinct forms in direct spatial relationships to each other, the artists of these scenes infused painting with a sense of realism.

However, despite the use of the techniques of naturalism—modulated colors, shading, perspective—the aims of these works should not be confused with the concerns of naturalism as it is understood in a Western context. These paintings still operate within the general strictures and conventions of illustrative and pictorial imagery and are governed by the same standards as earlier paintings and drawings.

The paintings in the *Bustan* of Sa'di copied in 1488, perhaps more than any others, articulate this new visual reality. In "King Dara and the Herdsman" (cat. no. 146, f. 10a) a carefully developed background creates an illusion of three-dimensional space around the figures, heightening the drama between the king and his herdsman. Separated from his companions while hunting, Dara comes upon his herdsman; failing to recognize him, the king fits an arrow to his bow, as if he were approaching an enemy. The herdsman quickly reproaches the ruler for his haste in drawing his weapon and then lectures him on his general neglect of his subjects. Both the king and the herdsman are rendered as full-bodied figures with strongly defined facial features and are set in a deep space. Thus, the conflict between the king and his herdsman becomes personal and direct rather than conceptual and abstract.

A similar sense of drama is established through the architectural setting in "The Seduction of Yusuf" (cat. no. 146, f. 52b), also in the *Bustan* of Sa'di. Zulaykha,

in a desperate attempt to seduce Yusuf, constructed a palace with seven doors leading to seven rooms, each more secluded than the previous one. Erotic paintings adorned the walls of the chambers. As Zulaykha conducted Yusuf from room to room, she locked each of the doors behind her until she reached the innermost one, where overcome with passion, she attempted to embrace him. Resisting temptation, Yusuf fled, and miraculously all of the doors opened before him as he made his escape. Bihzad's composition, with its complicated architectural forms, receding passageways, and brilliantly painted surfaces that depict Timurid tile work of the period, provides the perfect setting for the climactic moment when Yusuf flees from Zulaykha's advances.⁷⁵

Another intriguing aspect of this scene is that its details are not based on Sa'di's brief description of Zulaykha's palace. Instead, the building's iconography is derived from the mystical allegory of Yusuf and Zulaykha written by Jami in 1483–84.⁷⁶ The sumptuously rendered rooms of the palace are an appropriate visual counterpoint to Jami's poem, in which Zulaykha's palace is a symbol for the splendor of the material world, with the seven rooms representing the seven climes. For Jami the crux of Yusuf's moral dilemma is the temptation of yielding to Zulaykha without fear of human witnesses. Only at the last moment when Yusuf realizes that God is his witness does he flee. The locked doors and empty rooms of Bihzad's composition symbolize this conflict, illustrating the mystical themes inherent in Jami's poem.

Bihzad's reliance on the mystical allusions of Jami's work reflects the fascination with mysticism and Sufi ideas that permeated Sultan-Husayn's court. Like many leading intellectuals, Jami belonged to the Naqshbandi order, and through him Mir Ali-Sher was initiated into this Sufi group. With its emphasis on the silent as opposed to the loud *dhikr* (a ceremony involving the repetition of divine names) and *suhbat* (intimate conversations between master and disciple), the Naqshbandi stressed the spiritual purification of the

cat. no. 146

"King Dara and the Herdsman"
From a *Bustan* of Sa'di
Herat, dated A.H. Rajab 891
(A.D. June 1488)
f. 10a





Cat. no. 146

"The Seduction of Yusuf"
 From a *Bustan* of Sa'adi
 Herat, dated 861 Rabi' al-Bay
 15 June 1458
 14th

soul and the education of the heart rather than the lower soul.⁷⁴ The participation in Sufi orders by almost all members of Timurid society, including Sultan-Husayn, meant that mystical themes—the nature of love, achieving divine union, and gaining knowledge of God—affected the dynasty's literature as well as its art. Hagiographical studies such as Jami's *Nafahat al-uns* (Breaths of fellowship) documented contemporary Sufi orders while elaborating on traditional Sufi thought. Mystically oriented poetry, including the ruler's own *Diwan* (cat. no. 148), addressed Sufi themes and provided a rich source of inspiration for court artists.

The impact on the visual arts of this interest in Sufism occurred on a number of levels. At the most obvious, Sufi-inspired texts were copied, illuminated, bound in fine covers, and at times even illustrated. While production of such manuscripts had occurred as early as the second quarter of the fifteenth century, these texts became more prominent and were copied in larger numbers at the end of the century. The

Mathnawi of Rumi (cat. no. 99), the *Diwan* of Mir Ali-Sher,⁷⁵ and the *Khamisa* of Jami,⁷⁶ all copied for Sultan-Husayn, are typical of this kind of manuscript.

On another level illustrations from this period depicting Sufis and other holy men are more common. The paintings of "Khwaja Abdullah Ansari with Four of His Disciples" (fig. 93) and "Shaykh Iraqi Overcome at Parting" from Mir Ali-Sher's *Hayrat al-abrar* (fig. 99) are only two of the many images of mystics that abound in late fifteenth-century manuscripts. These illustrations, though embedded in poetic texts, acted as reminders of the importance of holy men at Sultan-Husayn's court and reflected the ruler's own interest in and patronage of mystic leaders and Sufis.

The most intriguing influence of mystically oriented thought on the visual arts, however, was in the choice of scenes illustrated in the great poetic texts. Instead of using the illustrations of these manuscripts as vehicles for emphasizing royalty the way Shahrukh and his sons did, a shift occurred: right rule became associated with

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cat. no. 99

Interior of lower cover and flap from the binding of a *Mathnawi-i ma'navi* of Jalaluddin Rumi, Herat, dated A.H. 887 (A.D. 1481)



fig. 99

"Shaykh Iraq Overcome at Parting"
From a *Harat al-shair* of Mir
Ali-Sher Nawa'i.

Herat, dated A.H. 840 A.D. 1435

Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper

4 5/8 x 10 1/2 cm. 1 3/4 x 4 in.

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. E.10.1

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religion and piety rather than battle and conquest. Scenes of princes enthroned, rulers feasting, hunts, and armies fighting, though still popular, compete with images devoted to unfulfilled love and death, two popular mystical themes.⁷⁷ The *Shahnama*, the royal manuscript par excellence with its emphasis on military might, apparently disappears as a vehicle for imperial projection. Neither Abu-Sa'id nor Sultan-Husayn, for example, are known to have commissioned copies of this text.

This new orientation is reflected in the unprecedented decision to include illustrations of the protagonist's suicide with the story of Princess Shirin and the stonecutter Farhad. Depictions of this tragic event, caused by Farhad having been told falsely of Shirin's death, occur in the *Khamsa* of Amir Khusraw dated 1485⁷⁸ and the *Khamsa* of Nizami completed in 1495 (cat. no. 140, f. 72b). A variation of this scene is in the *Khamsa* of Mir Ali-Sher copied for Badi'uzzaman in 1485, showing the stonecutter on the verge of suicide as he hears of Shirin's alleged death.⁷⁹ While these representations of Farhad evoke with pathos the notion that the true Sufi can only unite with the object of his devotion after death, the most potent images of this period are ones of lamentation. In the "Funeral Procession" (fig. 100) from the 1483 *Mantiq al-tayr* and the "Mourning for Ibn Salam" (cat. no. 140, f. 135b) from the *Khamsa* of Nizami copied for Amir Ali Farsi, the foci of the scenes are on the departed whose presence is marked by a partial view of a coffin in the lower right-hand corner of the former and by the disheveled appearance and torn clothes of the figures in the latter.

While earlier images of mourning, such as those in the great fourteenth-century Il-Khanid copy of the *Shahnama*, concentrate on the mourners' agony and the physical presence of the deceased,⁸⁰ these later paintings are iconographically decentralized. By removing the body as the principal point of reference in these scenes, the viewer is invited to share the mourners' grief. But in doing so, the lamentation of death is shifted from the individual to the general, from the specificity of this world to the all-encompassing embrace of the eternal. In this formal articulation of Sufi thought mourning is the process through which the heart is emptied and purified to receive the Divine. The inextricable bond between devotion, as represented by the mourners, and death in these images is a visualiza-



cat. no. 140

"The Suicide of Farhad"
from *Khamsa* of Nizami
Herati?, dated A.H. 900
(A.D. 1494-95)
f. 71b

tion of the mystical notion that no part of creation can reach a higher level of existence without sacrificing itself in love. This concept is eloquently stated in the poetry of Rumi:

Purify yourself from yourself, and become dust
So that grass grows out of your dust.
And when you become dry like grass, burn nicely
So that from your burning, light may shine forth,
And when you become from burning like ashes,
Then your ashes are the elixir.⁸¹

These haunting images of mourning, like the scene of Yusuf and Zulaykha from the *Bustan* of Sa'di, ceased to operate as mere illustrations of textual episodes and instead were imbued with multiple levels of meaning. Space, color, and narrative development within this context acquired symbolic qualities,⁸² allowing each scene to take on associations not directly related to the

text. The warm colors, full-bodied figures, and well-articulated space of these images enhanced their message by permitting the figures to express a greater range of emotions. This in turn transformed the actions and relationships developed in these and other late fifteenth-century paintings into more personal and at times even intimate events. This "thawing" of the rigid formality and crystalline facade of the Timurid aesthetic is a departure from an earlier imperial vision, but the paintings' refined pigments, lavish use of gold, and technical brilliance firmly link them to the earlier achievements of Shahrugh and his sons.

The interaction of various forces—the affirmation of Timur's charisma, a resurgence in Turkic values, a taste for the intricate, an emphasis on artists' individual distinctions, an extreme tendency to borrow from past forms, an interest in portraying everyday activities, and



Fig. 100

"Funeral Procession"
 from a *Maṭṭa al-Nayr* of Amir
 Herat, dated A.H. 888 (A.D. 1483)
 Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
 on paper
 24.8 x 14 cm (9 7/8 x 5 1/2 in.)
 New York, The Metropolitan Museum
 of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1963, 63.210.33,
 63.55a

a fascination with mysticism—defined the artistic directions of the late fifteenth century. In the cultured court of Sultan-Husayn and Mir Ali-Sher, where seemingly every gesture and word resonated with hidden meanings and subtle allusions, the visual arts were a vehicle for exploring the inner life of the dynasty's elite. The earlier obsession with outward symbols of royal power during Shahrukh's reign gave way to more intimate interests. Beleaguered by incessant political problems and the loss of military might, the princes of the house of Timur became increasingly introverted in their affairs. Enquette and formality replaced boldness and action. Babur recognized this change when he commented that his Timurid relatives at Herat "were

good enough as company and in social matters, in conversation and parties, but they were strangers to war, strategy, equipment, bold fight, and encounter."²¹

Through ever more complex devices and rhetorical actions the arts were used to create a cultural screen that enveloped the elite in an illusory sense of security and splendor. No longer capable of sustaining the imperial image fabricated during the first half of the fifteenth century, the Timurids concentrated attention upon themselves, away from the larger issues of conquest and empire building that had occupied them earlier in the dynasty.

This reorientation involved a search for technical perfection, with an emphasis on purely formal quali-

ties that overwhelmed all other concerns. Pictorial reality—always a nebulous concept in the visual arts of the Islamic world—was no longer consciously manipulated for dynastic purposes. Instead it was treated more inwardly as a purely sensory illusion with no overt political agenda, a fleeting moment in time, like a dream composed of past images and memories. The warmer colors and more intense examination of individual relationships that characterize many of the paintings produced during Sultan-Husayn's reign are inherently self-indulgent. In their exploration of leisurely pursuits, mystical issues, and the details of everyday life, they retreat from the iconic facade of earlier imperial works.

Mir Ali-Sher's interest in Turkic culture and language can be seen in this context as an attempt to find a common ground with an earlier era of glory. By doing so, he hoped to reaffirm and strengthen the genuine ethnic sentiments of the dynasty's Turkic elite. With the court's almost total absorption of Persianate culture, however, his efforts to revive awareness in the dynasty's seminomadic origins were doomed from the beginning. Shorn of their military might, the Timurids still managed to project a sense of power by means of their cultural authority. In late fifteenth-century Iran and Central Asia they established themselves as the ultimate arbiters of sophistication and taste. It was at their court that the finest poets and artists worked, that the most opulent objects were displayed and used, that conversation was most challenging, intelligence and wit most cultivated and prized. Even the splendor of the Aqqoyunlu court at Tabriz, which attracted a number of important artists and poets and which modeled itself to a large extent on the Timurid court, could not rival the Herat of Sultan-Husayn.

The stability provided by Sultan-Husayn's long rule created an environment in which the more personal, inner-directed artistic concerns of the dynasty could be fully explored. By the end of the fifteenth century all artistic achievements within Iran and Central Asia were measured by the standards of the Timurid court. By shifting the focus of their energies from the battlefield to the arts, the Timurids were able to restructure the image of their power, creating a facade, whose brilliant exterior masked an insubstantial core. Through the cultural and artistic prestige they projected, they were able to maintain the aura of Timurid power so central to their existence.



cat. no. 140

"Mourning for Ibn Salam"
From a *Khamsa* of Nizami
Herat(?), dated A.H. 900
A.D. 1494-95
L. 135b

NOTES

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9. Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, *Baburnama*, trans. Annette Susannah Beveridge (London: Luzac & Co., 1971), p. 258.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

11. H. 762, f. 327a; "Colophon for a Royal Copy of Nizami's *Khamsa*," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.

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20. O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan*, p. 81.

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22. "Sultan-Husayn Mirza's 'Apologia,'" in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.

23. *Ibid.*

24. Maria Eva Subtelny, "Socioeconomic Bases of Cultural Patronage under the Later Timurids," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 10, no. 4 (1988), 479-505.

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39. Subtelny, "The Poetic Circle," pp. 162-64.

40. *Ibid.*, pp. 144-45.

41. Subtelny, "Scenes from the Literary Life," p. 149.

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The Timurid Resonance

When the victory-laden breeze of divine favor blew from Ribat-i Amir Ali-Sher and Manzil-i Maral through the banners of Muhammad Khan Shaybani, Sultan Badi'uzzaman Mirza and Muzaffar Mirza Kūrāgān, along with most of the great amirs and soldiers, acted in accordance with the dictum "Flee from what cannot be borne," and each fled in rout in a different direction. . . . Muhammad Khan Shaybani camped at the end of the day in the Kahdistan Meadow, assured of his mastery over the realm of Khurasan and with the standards of majesty and success raised high. "O God, thou givest the kingdom unto whom thou wilt, and thou takest away the kingdom from whom thou wilt." (Koran 3:26)¹

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THE SEDUCTIVE twilight world of late Timurid Herat was extinguished with little protest in 1507 by the Uzbek hordes. Sultan-Husayn Mirza did not witness the fall of his kingdom, having died in May of the previous year, reduced in his final days to a parody of former Timurid grandeur by his obsessive attachments to wine, pigeon flying, cockfighting, and ram-fighting.² Reluctant and unable to confront the growing Uzbek challenge in Transoxiana, he left the capital on his death in the hands of his two cultivated but militarily inept sons, Badi'uzzaman Mirza and Muzaffar-Husayn; both fled before the Uzbek advance under Muhammad Khan Shaybani (d. 1510), a grandson of the former Timurid ally Abu'l-Khayr Khan. Six years earlier this mighty descendant of Chingiz Khan had seized Samarqand from Zahiruddin Babur, a minor Timurid prince from Ferghana. By conquering Timur's city and then all of Transoxiana, the Uzbeks established the basis of a powerful, century-long empire that would dominate Central Asia during the sixteenth century.

The political fall of the Timurids, however, hardly signaled the demise in the eastern Islamic world of the dynasty's cultural impact. In a remarkable demonstra-

The foothills of the Hindu Kush, northern Afghanistan, crossed by the Timurid prince Bahur ibn Umar Shaykh on his march to India in the early sixteenth century

tion of the powerful role aesthetics would play in the post-Timurid political landscape, the cultural legacy of Timur's descendants became the subject of myth and legend among later ruling elites. Timurid dynastic goals had been successfully realized in large part by a process of mythopoeic aggrandizement of their own achievements. Any subsequent elaboration of that image in the period immediately following their fall would seem unlikely, yet the ruling house actually underwent a cultural apotheosis during the sixteenth century.

The Uzbek conquest of Herat had an immediate impact on this artificial extension of the dynasty's cultural charisma: Timurid princes, artists, and poets as well as works of art were scattered far beyond the borders of Sultan-Husayn's realm. Yet the creation of the Timurid myth had begun earlier in the fifteenth century with the princes' own recognition of the critical importance artistic production held for dynastic aspirations. During Shahrukh's reign the historical, cultural, and institutional remnants of the Mongol empire, which had remained integral elements of Timurid rule, were modified by the state's expedient sponsorship of Islam. Chingizid ideology and nomadic steppe traditions were accommodated to a power structure dependent on cooperation and interaction with both religious classes and the urban institutions of Islamic Iran. The Timurids supplemented their manipulations of these sources of power with another important means of political legitimacy, cultural patronage, and the artistic horizons of the eastern Islamic world were forever changed.

The Timurids' early realization that cultural prowess would translate into political prestige helped transform Timur's empire from a military idea into a cultural force. By the end of the fifteenth century Timur's grandiose seminomadic vision had been distilled to a shimmering paradigm of mannered urban sophistication that proved irresistible to the elites of empires that followed the Timurid fall. The dynasty's goal of political, social, and economic domination had remained intact; what had changed were the available methods of control. For the major Islamic powers of the sixteenth century the Timurid conception and practice of cultural patronage offered a perception of aesthetics as a necessary device in imperial strategies. It is this aspect of the Timurids' artistic achievements that has warranted close scrutiny, for it offers insights into the role art and creativity have played historically in serving power.

During the fifteenth century the cultural efflorescence inspired by the Timurid princes found no lack of eager admirers ready to enjoy and exploit its widely acknowledged influence. This was particularly true for the rulers of both the Qaraqoyunlu and Aqqoyunlu Turcoman confederations of western Iran. Sharing with their Timurid rivals a common linguistic and tribal background, Turcoman art often so closely resembles the work of their eastern opponents that distinctions are at times meaningless. Architectural historians, for instance, view the scattered remains of west Iranian monuments commissioned by Turcoman patrons as essentially Timurid buildings, built in the current style of Transoxiana and Khurasan.³ Turcoman and Timurid patrons competed for artists, poets, calligraphers, and craftsmen, and in this climate even a Herat court fixture like the poet Abdul-Rahman Jami could dedicate his works equally to Sultan-Husayn and Sultan Ya'qub Aqqoyunlu (d. 1490).

Cultural rivalry reached its apogee in the arts of the book, where Turcoman imitations and modifications of Timurid visual formulae underline the allure Herat exerted as the artistic and literary capital of the Turco-Iranian world. The Turcoman court at Tabriz became the center of a distinctive painting that rivaled that of Herat, but there is little argument over its origins and many of its persistent influences.⁴ Timurid works and attitudes toward the art of the book served as the source for Turcoman developments, but it was Timurid aesthetic ideals that endured beyond the political life of both dynasties.

The Timurid cultural legacy lived on among four succeeding and disparate Turkic dynasties that spanned the eastern Islamic world: the Uzbeks in Transoxiana (1500–1598), the Safavids in Iran (1501–1732), the Ottomans in Turkey (1281–1924), and the Mughals in India (1526–1858). Their manipulation and appropriation of Timurid achievements, attitudes, and ideals were as varied as their purposes: the Uzbek reaction was essentially imitation, the Safavid and Ottoman response one of appropriation, and the Mughals explored the aesthetic and cultural potential of the Timurid idea of cultural power as a political force. Yet in their implicit recognition of the dynasty's almost talismanic significance as a symbol of cultural might, each to some extent mythicized the Timurid contribution.

Such a process occurred in large part because the

carriers of Timurid charisma—mainly objects but also artists and occasionally even princes—commanded tremendous prestige. While it was entirely acceptable on military and political levels to destroy and mutilate certain other dynastic manifestations, these carriers were effectively removed from dynastic combat. Viewed as trophies, they were revered embodiments of a desired status among the new cultural elites. This phenomenon stands in marked contrast to most of the cultural remains of earlier Iranian dynasties, both before and after the coming of Islam, which were often consciously effaced by succeeding powers.

The cultural magnification of the vanquished Timurid dynasty by far-flung, antagonistic states reflects the growing role of patronage and aesthetics in the early sixteenth century, when Muslim political power was arguably at its peak. It also points to a common link among these four empires at the beginning of the modern era: their roots in the Mongol notion of a military patronage state. All of them had some semblance of Turkic and Mongol traditions in their backgrounds, and despite individual modifications their administrative, military, and cultural institutions shared considerable similarities.⁵ The political and military ascendancy of these Turkic groups, however, was accompanied by the continued dominance of Persianate culture in the eastern Islamic world. This combination of Turkic and Persianate influences created a climate responsive to past Timurid political and cultural achievements. The prestige of Timur's descendants was inextricably linked to the ongoing political role of patronage in the quest for legitimacy by military conquerors.

With their seizure of Transoxiana and Khurasan the Uzbeks physically appropriated the remnants of the Timurid state. Their mindset and political and geographic circumstances were in many ways analogous to those of the early Timurids, and they consciously adopted and perpetuated the model of Timurid cultural patronage to an extent that surpassed any of their political rivals.⁶ As genuine, resurgent Chingizids, they actually considered the Timurids their inferiors, but as a steppe-based dynasty whose power rested on their possession of Mongol charisma, they were relative strangers to Islamic urban culture and rule. At the turn of the fifteenth century the cultural elite of the Islamic Iranian world used the term *Uzbek* to signify

"uncouth" or "uncultured."⁷

Like the Timurids, the Uzbeks sought to fashion a synthesis of nomadic legitimizing principles and the *shari'a*, initially modifying titles and devising legal justifications to conform outwardly to Islamic ideals.⁸ To overcome their cultural shortcomings they quickly adopted the Timurid patronage model to sustain and foster urban cultural traditions that would buttress their ruling claims. In architecture, for example, Uzbek building programs, particularly those in their capital of Bukhara, were based in both form and decoration on Timurid prototypes.⁹

More symptomatic of the urgency of the Uzbek assimilation was the conduct of cultural life in Herat under Muhammad Khan Shaybani's occupation. The pragmatic, ad hoc nature of artist-patron relationships in the military patronage state eliminated many cultural obstacles that would normally have arisen in the transition of power. For example, when Muhammad Khan Shaybani first entered Herat, Fasihuddin Sahibdara, one of Mir Ali-Sher Nawa'i's closest companions and also the supervisor of Sultan-Husayn's *kitabkhana*, wrote a panegyric in his honor. The Uzbek khan had little trouble surrounding himself with a circle of poetic luminaries formerly in service to the Timurid elite.¹⁰

Muhammad Khan Shaybani's manners were nonetheless viewed with abhorrence by his more cultivated rivals like the Timurid prince Babur, who thought of him as an uncultured parvenu:

Directly he had possession of Herat, Shaibaq Khan [Muhammad Khan Shaybani] married and took Muzaffar Mirza's wife, Khan-zada Khanim, without regard to the running-out of the legal term. His own illiteracy not forbidding, he instructed in the exposition of the Koran, Qazi Ikhtiyar and Muhammad Mir Yusuf, two of the celebrated and highly-skilled mullas of Herat; he took a pen and corrected the handwriting of Mulla Sultan Ali of Mashhad and the drawing of Bihzad; and every few days, when he had composed some tasteless couplet, he would have it read from the pulpit, hung in the Char-su (Square), and for it accept the offerings of the towns-people! Spite of his early rising, his not neglecting the Five Prayers, and his fair knowledge of the art of reciting the Koran, there issued from

him many an act and deed as absurd, as impudent, and as heathenish as those just named.¹¹

Ever sensitive to the importance of his cultural image, Muhammad Khan Shaybani ordered his portrait painted in the costume of a Timurid prince surrounded by inkpot, pens, and a book. Such objects were not the paraphernalia of a nomad but were part of the Khan's perception of a refined urban gentleman. His poet laureate Muhammad-Salih (d. 1536) in the *Shaybaninama* (History of Shaybani) would later even have him utter the words, "Let the Chaghatay [the Timurids] not call me an Uzbek."¹²

The intriguing memoirs of Wasifi, written in 1538–39 and dedicated to the Uzbek ruler Keldi-Muhammad, offer an insight into the extent of the Uzbeks' unflagging interest in the minutiae of Timurid customs and manners. Something of a charlatan, the author exploited his knowledge of Timurid court life to further his own interests at the Uzbek courts. He joined the isolated court of Keldi-Muhammad at Shahrukhiyya, north of Tashkent, in 1518, where his function was to provide entertaining, didactic anecdotes about urbane behavior; he regaled his patron with stories of the formal Timurid majlises, including details of its leading personalities and etiquette. In these tales no figure loomed larger than that of Mir Ali-Sher Nawa'i, whose authority in Timurid cultural affairs was perceived as unassailable.

Even more revealing is Wasifi's description of past rulers whom the Uzbeks regarded as models. Significantly, all belong to the romanticized Iranian Islamic sedentary sphere of just and enlightened rulers, not the Turco-Mongol warlord tradition of the steppe: the Sasanian king Anushirvan, the Ghaznavid Sultan-Mahmud, and the Timurids Baysunghur, Ulugh-Beg, and Husayn Mirza.¹³ An equally fascinating example of this codification and preservation of Timurid culture for those unfamiliar with its details is a late Timurid or Uzbek manual on how to build a garden; it contains precisely the kind of detailed information coveted by newcomers to refined urban pleasures like the Uzbeks.¹⁴

While the Uzbeks considered themselves successors to the Timurid state, they held Herat a mere three years before the Safavid conquest of 1510, in which Muhammad Khan Shaybani was killed. Subsequent Uzbek raids and the Safavids' violent imposition of

Shiite religious and political ideology created a climate increasingly unsuitable for cultural pursuits and gradually forced the emigration of men of talent. This was one of the avenues by which the traditions of Timurid painting were established in Uzbek ateliers across the Oxus.

There is evidence of the establishment of a kitabkhana system as early as the 1520s with calligraphers and painters at Keldi-Muhammad's courts at Shahrukhiyya and Tashkent.¹⁵ The Uzbeks' fascination with the formal aspects and activities of the Timurid court is apparent in both the subjects and forms painting assumed under their patronage. Wholesale incorporation of individual figures or groups from Herat painting became commonplace almost immediately in this short-lived atelier, and even unfinished Timurid books like a *Diwan* of Mir Ali-Sher copied by Sultan-Ali Mashhadi at Herat were brought there to be illustrated.¹⁶

With the decline of activity at Keldi-Muhammad's court following his disastrous campaign against Khurasan in 1529, Bukhara under Ubaydallah Khan (r. 1512–39; from 1533 the head of all Uzbeks) became the center of Uzbek cultural life. Interest in Timurid culture remained feverish, and the six major campaigns led by Ubaydallah against Safavid Khurasan continually stocked the Bukharan kitabkhana with valued artists like Mahmud Mudhahhib and the calligrapher Mir-Ali, both of whom were trained in the Timurid Herat tradition.¹⁷ Exquisite works such as the 1523 *Mihr u Mushtari* (Mihr and Mushtari) are steeped in Timurid attitudes, imitating earlier subjects, compositions, and methods of execution found in Herat painting.¹⁸ Under Ubaydallah Bukhara was the guardian and bastion of these values, as signaled by the arrival in the 1530s of one of Bihzad's pupils, Shaykhzada, from the rival Safavid atelier at Tabriz; despite his work on a number of important Safavid manuscripts (fig. 104), his strict adherence to the old Herat canons of proportion and mathematical precision was more attuned to the vision desired in Bukhara.¹⁹

The death of Ubaydallah in 1539 left his son Abu'l-Ghazi Abdul-Aziz Bahadur (r. 1540–49) as the leading Uzbek patron of art, literature, and architecture, and the 1540s represent the zenith at Bukhara of both the Timurid Herat tradition and Uzbek painting. The written sources mimic Timurid encomia in their lavish

praise of the splendor and learning of this court, and the subtle, exquisitely refined manuscripts executed for Abdul-Aziz are proof of the success of the Uzbek elites' conscious subordination of their nomadic origins.

Two manuscripts from the 1540s illustrate both the preservation and ongoing modification of the Timurid ideal four decades after the Uzbek conquest. A double-page composition from a manuscript of Jami's *Baharistan* (Abode of spring; cat. no. 159), spuriously dated 1498 and bearing a false attribution to Sultan-Husayn Mirza, features the precise, balanced figural relationships, luxurious decoration, and delicately rendered elements expected in late Herat work. Yet its rich, simplified color and reductive space are distinctive of Bukharan work. The paintings in the book appear to have been remounted from another Bukharan manuscript while the text pages carry dedications dated 1547 to Abdul-Aziz. The entire book, in fact, seems intent on deliberately blurring the distinctions between Timurid and Uzbek painting.

More explicit in its intentions is a long dedicatory inscription in a 1547 *Gulistan* of Sa'di also dedicated to Abdul-Aziz. With careful language that clearly states a calculated politico-religious orientation, it succinctly symbolizes the Uzbeks' exploitation of Timurid cultural charisma and their transformation from Chingizid steppe raiders to exalted rulers in the Islamic Iranian sedentary tradition:

This book of the *Gulistan*, whose every page excites the envy of Paradise and is a source of jealousy to the studios of China, whose "blacks" are light for the eyes of the masters of observation, and whose "whites" are a joy to the hearts of the possessors of wisdom, was transcribed during the reign of the exalted monarch, the late deceased Sultan Husayn Mirza, whose home is in Heaven, by the miraculous and magical pen of Mawlana Sultan 'Ali *al-katib* al-Mashhadi, and was perfected and completed by the decoration of the most eminent artists of the time and by the adornment of the greatest illuminators of the world during the happy reign of His Majesty the Khaqan, the greatest, most noble and most just among the monarchs of the world, the stay of the followers of Islam, the Shadow of God, the king of knowledge, the master of the learned and the believers, the equal of Alexander and the emblem of



Fig. 101

"Harun Tay and the Thorn-Gatherer"
From a *Gulistan* of Sa'di
Bukhara, dated A.D. 954 (A.D. 1547)
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold

20.5 x 12.7 (8 x 5 in.)
Geneva, Bodmer Foundation,
Pers. Ms. 90, f. 45a

Solomon, the devoted friend of dervishes, Abu'l-Ghazi 'Abd al-Aziz Bahadur Khan, may God Most High establish his sovereignty.⁴⁰

Likely brought to Bukhara from one of the frequent raids on Herat, the book has eight paintings that follow the late Timurid pattern of grouping paintings in pairs. They appear to be splendidly faithful reproductions of the Herat painting canon (fig. 101), though some may actually be late Timurid works. Yet changes have occurred: amidst the expected figural interplay and sensitively rendered faces one finds a less-varied

BAHARISTAN
cat. no. 159

"The Prophet Muhammad in a Mosque
with His Companions"
From a *Baharistan* of Jami
Bukhara, c. 1525-30
ff. 29b-30a





palette, larger figures, more open compositions, and a tendency toward generalized simplification that renders pictorial space flat and less complex.

These traits that distinguished painting under Abdul-Aziz gave tangible form to Uzbek political and cultural ambitions. They not only established the Uzbeks as a new aesthetic force in Central Asia but also marked the culmination of the dynasty's transformation by 1550. A measure of the rapid success they enjoyed during the first half of the century in refashioning themselves in Timurid guise is the concession of their contemporary, the Chaghatayid prince Mirza Muhammad-Haydar Dughlat, an admirer of things Timurid and no friend of the Uzbeks. He remarked that under their rule "Bukhara has become such a center of arts and sciences that it recalls Herat in the days of Mirza Sultan Husain."⁴¹

The "gunpowder empires" of Iran, Turkey, and India that dominated the Muslim world of the sixteenth century were, for all their debt to the principles of Turco-Mongol statecraft, different entities from the Uzbek dynasty. The new political order in Iran appropriated Timurid artistic ideals in a considerably different manner than the Uzbeks. Shiism and folk Islam in northwestern Iran and Anatolia had propelled a Sufi order known as the Safaviyya (Safavids) to a position of surprising power by the time of the Timurid collapse.

Beginning in the fourteenth century, the Safavids fervently embraced Shiism and cultivated these beliefs among pastoral Turkic tribes. By the late fifteenth century a new tendency emerged in this religious order: no longer content with restricting themselves to spiritual matters, they aspired to temporal power as well, a change symbolized by their replacing the religious title "shaykh" with the secular "sultan" in proclamations. Unleashing their powerful Turkic followers, known as the Qizilbash (Red Heads) after their distinctive scarlet headgear, the Safavids annihilated the Aqqoyunlu dynasty in 1501. At their new capital of Tabriz, Isma'il, the sixteen-year-old Safavid *pir* (Sufi master), donned a crown as *shah* (king).

This new regime was distinguished from its predecessors and contemporaries by its intention of replacing Sunni Islam with the Shiite creed. While Safavid power was based on Turkic tribal strength, Shiism bound its supporters together by deeply felt mystical



Fig. 101

Jug decorated for Shah Isma'il Safavi
Tabriz, c. 1501–24
Jade (mephraz) inlaid with gold
Height: 14 cm (5 1/2 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Treasury,
no. 1844

allegiances, providing this tribal confederacy with a more aggressive religious emphasis. Forcing the conversion of Iran's population, the Safavids expanded from the old Aqqoyunlu domains to move against Sunni states, attacking the Ottomans in the west and the Uzbeks in the east with a startling ferocity. That fervor was demonstrated when Isma'il in 1510 defeated and killed Muhammad Khan Shaybani to break the Uzbek hold on Herat and Khurasan; afterward he reportedly lined his rival's skull with gold and fashioned a drinking cup from it.⁴²

Iran's new politico-religious alignment effectively left behind much of its Timurid past. Timurid ruling principles retained little influence, though the continuing allure of their prestige can be discerned in Safavid origin myths, which include Timur's veneration of the early Safavid shaykh Khwaja Ali and his subsequent benefaction of lands and Ottoman prisoners to the order at Ardabil.⁴³ Only in the cultural sphere did the Timurid legacy have a truly lasting impact. The Safavids' centralized power and wealth triggered in Tabriz yet another surge of Persianate art and letters. In painting, literature, architecture, metalwork, textiles, carpets, and wood carving Timurid ideas and practices continued to influence the Safavids.⁴⁴

The Safavid cultural agenda recognized the para-

mount aesthetic authority of the royal patron-connoisseur as embodied in the Timurid model. Contact with Timurid royalty and the acquisition of Timurid objects helped to reinforce the necessity of patronage as a component of their rule. The conquest of Herat in 1510 undoubtedly brought artistic booty back to Tabriz, but there were earlier arrivals as well. In the first decade of the sixteenth century growing Safavid power and Timurid decline resulted in a diaspora from Khurasan. Included were defectors to the Safavid cause like the Timurid prince Muhammad-Husayn, the governor of Astarabad. He was described by Babur as a talented poet, turned "heretic" in the company of Shah Isma'il, whom he joined in 1504. In December of the same year an embassy asking for peace and bearing rare gifts was sent by Sultan-Husayn himself. Husayn's son Badi'uzza-man was twice a refugee at Shah Isma'il's court (1508–9 and 1513–14) and may have brought precious books and objects from Herat.³¹

The Safavids' work in two quintessentially Timurid art forms—books and carved jades—effectively reveals the debt owed by the Safavids to their eastern predecessors. An example of this embrace is a spectacular jade jug inscribed with Isma'il's name (fig. 102).³² Of the same form as Ulugh-Beg's famed white jug, it carries a metal dragon handle and is sumptuously inlaid with a coiling web of arabesques and inscriptions in gold against its dark green ground. The inlay work was executed under the Safavids, but the vessel may well be Timurid. While Safavid interest in jade carving never equaled that of the Timurids,³³ the adoption of this archetypal Timurid object makes clear Isma'il's intention of securing a place among the cultural elite of eastern Islam.

More important in Isma'il's transition from mysticism and military campaigning to refined royal patronage was his acquisition of the Turcoman libraries at Tabriz with their wealth of manuscripts, drawings, and sketches. Isma'il's kitabkhana was further supplemented by artists and calligraphers from other centers he had conquered, including Baghdad, Shiraz, and Isfahan. The transformation culminates in Isma'il's *Diwan* (c. 1520), a work whose poetic contents written in Turki include *ghazals* on love as well as mystical proclamations. Its inspiration was undoubtedly the *Diwan* of Sultan-Husayn Mirza, the accepted Turco-Iranian model for royal poetic aspirations.³⁴

Another telling reflection of Isma'il's success in establishing his image as a cultural patron is the apocryphal tale in which he hides the Timurid artist Bihzad and the calligrapher Shah-Mahmud of Nishapur in a cave during the Ottoman defeat of the Safavids at the battle of Chaldiran in 1514. This story from an Ottoman *tadhkira* probably served not as factual history but as a moral fable, demonstrating Isma'il's enlightened awareness of the importance of artistic talent.³⁵

No Safavid fulfilled the new princely role of patronage more brilliantly than Isma'il's son Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–76). Qazi Ahmad's later description of him adopts the panegyrics used in describing the great Timurid Maecenases: "At first Shah Tahmasp was greatly drawn to learning *nasta'liq* script and painting and spent his blessed time on these. He became an incomparable master rising above all artists in drawing and painting. . . . In those days [of his reign] the career of calligraphers and artists reached the highest degree; they enjoyed perfect intimacy and were gathered in the library of the late Shah."³⁶ Qazi Ahmad also reports that Tahmasp executed wall paintings for his palace at Qazwin, and surviving portraits attributed to the shah's hand testify to his talent.³⁷

The catalyst in Tahmasp's development as a patron was his appointment to the titular governorship of Herat in 1516. During these critical years of his youth Tahmasp was removed from Tabriz to the cultivated atmosphere of the former capital, where he was exposed to the remnants of the Timurid court, including evidently Bihzad. There the foundations of Tahmasp's taste were laid by artists, calligraphers, musicians, and poets who continued to practice according to the ideals of the Timurid tradition.

The return of the prince to Tabriz in 1522 subtly altered the course of Safavid painting. Timurid influence at the Safavid court was also reinforced by the arrival at Tabriz of Bihzad. Shah Isma'il appointed him to head the kitabkhana,³⁸ and the bombastic, rhetorical wording of his investiture decree can be viewed both as an acknowledgment of his artistic authority and an early manifestation of the Safavid deification of the artist:

We hereby command that within these Well-Protected Realms the rarity of the age, model of depicitors, example of limners, Master Kamaluddin

Bihzad, by whose face-revealing brush Mani is put to shame and by whose picture-adorning pen the Artang Tablet is embarrassed, and who, like the pen, continually holds his head to the line of commands that are unquestioningly obeyed, and who, like a compass, keeps his foot firmly planted at the center of allegiance to the threshold where nests the caliphate, this master whom we have encompassed with royal favors and regal kindnesses, be appointed herewith to the post of superintendent and chief of the men of the royal kitabkhana—the scribes, painters, limners, rulers, fleckers, gold-leaf makers, lapis lazuli washers, and the others who are attached to the aforesaid affairs.

Let the enlightened officers, peerless and matchless viziers, regents of the Court of World Refuge, intimates of the Celestial Court, agents of administrative affairs, and chiefs of fiscal affairs in general—and those attached to the royal kitabkhana and the aforementioned group in particular—recognize the aforesaid master as appointed to the superintendence. Let them perform the tasks of the kitabkhana by his direction, and let them consider official what is signed and sealed by him. Let them not transgress his words or direction or fail to heed what he says concerning the running and organization of the affairs of the royal kitabkhana. And let them consider any and all that pertains to the aforesaid affairs especially his affair.¹¹

While past his artistic prime and acting essentially as an instructor rather than practitioner, Bihzad's appointment nonetheless brought the principles of disciplined refinement and execution from the Timurid kitabkhana to the court at Tabriz. His influence on the prince's and court artists' tastes assured the movement toward Timurid ideals, which were already emerging in Safavid painting. The Timurid aesthetic can be seen in a precious, richly illuminated copy of *Guy u chawgan* (Ball and polo stick, 1524–25), a mystical poem by Arifi.¹² Copied by Tahmasp and presented to his vizier Qazi-yi Jahan, the book has eighteen illustrations, which imitate the work of Bihzad. The Timurid master even may have contributed to some of the paintings, but the majority are by the leading court artists, who have verged from the Turcoman illustrative tradition to that of the Timurids. These paintings show how the

more turbulent space, ornament, vegetation, and characterizations of Turcoman art were directed into the seamless, impassive facade of Herat painting (fig. 103).

The return of Tahmasp and the presence of Bihzad coincided with the early stages of production of perhaps the most lavish royal manuscript in existence, the great Safavid *Shahnama* (popularly known as the



fig. 101

A Prince Seated in a Garden
from a *Guy u chawgan*
Tabriz, dated A.H. 911 / A.D. 1524–25
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Leningrad, Saitykin-Schedrin State
Public Library, Dorn 440, f. 59a

Houghton *Shahnama*) executed about 1522–35. Its 258 paintings allow one to trace the development of the Safavid aesthetic and reflect the powerful effect that Timurid notions of painting exercised on its illustrative program.³⁵

The Safavids also assimilated Timurid aesthetic prestige by modifying earlier manuscripts, such as a *Mathnawi* of Rumi copied by the famed Timurid calligrapher Sultan-Ali Mashhadi. Fitted with a Safavid frontispiece, it exemplifies a common Safavid strategy of altering manuscripts with illumination or paintings to incorporate the Timurid cultural aura.³⁶

While the Herat tradition was assimilated into Safavid painting, Timurid ideals of patronage spread throughout the ruling house. Tahmasp's brothers Bahram Mirza and Sam Mirza, along with Bahram's son Ibrahim Mirza, were cultivated patrons whose activities recalled the familial aesthetic bonds of the Timurids. A *Diwan* of Hafiz executed for Sam Mirza about 1526–27 includes one signed illustration (fig. 104) by Bihzad's former pupil Shaykhzada. While it shows concessions to contemporary Safavid taste, its spatial organization, graphic discipline, and ornament are allied in spirit to late Timurid Herat painting. Bahram Mirza's album completed in 1544, now known as H.2154, for example, summarizes the prince's taste and influence as well as the dynasty's efforts to exploit Timurid artistic prestige. The album, a carefully constructed assemblage, effectively functions as a history of the Persianate tradition of the arts of the book; it contains numerous Timurid works, including paintings and drawings identified by elaborate *'ummans* (illuminated headings), which attribute them to Shah-Muzaffar and Bihzad.³⁷

These attributions were made by the Safavid painter Dost-Muhammad, another Herat native and pupil of Bihzad, who directed the compilation of the album for Bahram Mirza. His often-quoted preface to the album, which exalts the role of the Timurids and their artists in the development of Persianate painting, particularly emphasized the importance of Bihzad, praise that in turn contributed to the Safavid cultural image. The preface not only flatters the author's own artistic pedigree but Bahram Mirza's tastes as well, which were formed during his governorship of Herat from 1530 through 1534.

Ibrahim Mirza exhibited a similar veneration of Ti-

murid works and fashioned his own exquisite album of paintings by Bihzad and his peers together with calligraphy by Safavid masters. After his murder in 1577, it was destroyed by his widow to prevent its acquisition by her husband's murderer and the new shah, Isma'il II.³⁸

The long list of Timurid painters and calligraphers who eventually worked for the Safavids, not to mention Safavid artists trained by those masters, assured a lingering Timurid influence in Safavid art.³⁹ Timurid manuscripts, drawings, and sketches served as vital transmitters in this process. The Safavids acquired Timurid plunder during their 1510 conquest of Herat as well as finding in Tabriz plentiful booty from earlier Turcoman occupations of the Timurid capital.

Timurid manuscripts, whether illustrated or not, continued to be valued objects in the Safavid mind as late as the early seventeenth century. As he did with other rarities, such as Chinese porcelain and carved jade, Shah Abbas I (r. 1588–1629) gave as *waqf* to the dynastic shrine at Ardabil a number of Timurid books, including the 1483 *Mantiq al-tayr* (cat. nos. 153–54, figs. 98, 100), which he had remounted and rebound in addition to adding new paintings and illuminations.⁴⁰

In the West the fall of Constantinople and the Byzantine empire to the Ottoman Turks in 1453 marked more than the reemergence of a powerful Muslim state. It effectively recaptured for the Ottomans the prestige and momentum of empire building that the dynasty had relinquished in its catastrophic defeat by Timur in 1402 at Ankara. By the end of the fifteenth century it had developed from a frontier *ghazi* (warrior for Islam) state, inspired by its position on the borders of Christendom, into a frighteningly efficient military state that challenged Europe as well as the rest of the Muslim world. With its huge, centralized bureaucracy and the full support of the *ulema* the dynasty was able to pursue a policy of military conquest and territorial expansion that became a mainstay of its economy and ideology that developed after the debacle of Ankara.

It seems, therefore, ironic that Ottoman literary and artistic expression was susceptible to the Timurid legacy. Further removed from the Timurid heartlands than other rivals and largely peripheral to the cultural events of those regions, the Ottomans nonetheless used elements of the Timurid vision in constructing their imperial image. As with the Timurids, the court and its



fig. 104

"Episode in a Mosque"

From a *Diwan* of Hafez

Tahmasbi c. 1526

Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper

25 x 14.4 cm. (9 7/8 x 5 3/4 in.)

Private collection

artistic and literary accoutrements were the focus of Ottoman culture. Mehmed II (r. 1451–81) developed elaborate court ceremonies and practices based on Byzantine models, yet the political ideals behind this pomp were those of the great Turkish and Mongol states of Islam: the Seljuqs, Mongols, and most probably the Timurids.⁴¹ Following their examples, the Ottomans became ardent admirers of Persianate culture. Members of the Ottoman royal family were educated in palace schools and exposed to its charms. Not until nearly the eighteenth century, in fact, did an elaborate, Persianized Turkic language known as Ottoman Turkish replace Persian as the court language.

Cultural links with the Timurids were encouraged by the educated elites' growing curiosity about their historical origins among the Turkish peoples of Central Asia, an interest spurred by cultural and linguistic affinities. The Anatolian Turks' somewhat romantic interest in their eastern heritage appeared well before the advent of the Timurids; the ghazi states of the early fourteenth century attracted scholars from Central Asia, and verse in Mongolian and documents in Uighur script are known to have been executed in Anatolia.⁴² Timur's penetration into Anatolia very likely strengthened this connection.⁴³

While Timurid centers in Iran and Central Asia attracted scholars and students during the fifteenth century, the renewed Ottoman empire made Anatolia increasingly attractive to eastern scholars and artists as well. The cultural exchange between the two dynasties was enhanced by diplomatic contacts in the form of official correspondence, and scholars and artists often moved between the two kingdoms. The astronomer Qazizada Rumi was born in Bursa but joined Ulugh-Beg's court in Samarqand to further his studies. Ali Qushchi, a student and collaborator of Qazizada at Ulugh-Beg's observatory, later also returned to settle in Istanbul, where he was appointed chief astronomer at the mosque of Ayasofya under the patronage of Mehmed II. Fenarizada Qazi Ali Ala'uddin (d. 1497/98), who studied at Herat, Bukhara, and Samarqand before returning to Anatolia, appears to have been responsible for bringing the 1439 *Kutadgu bilig* (Wisdom of royal glory) in Uighur script west.⁴⁴ In a letter now preserved in Istanbul the calligrapher Ahmad ibn Abdullah al-Hijazi, who journeyed to Edirne in 1441, states that his calling was inspired by the "great sultans of the age"

who were themselves calligraphers: Ibrahim-Sultan, Baysunghur, Ulugh-Beg, and Shahrukh.⁴⁵

Even during the sixteenth century contact with Timurids continued to affect the Ottomans' artistic efforts. After a successful 1514 raid on Safavid Tabriz, an official account recorded, "Prince Badi uz-Zaman, son of the great shah of Khurasan Sultan-Husayn Bayqara, and with him the famous artists and artisans of Khurasan then in Tabriz . . . were all rounded up . . . and ordered off to Istanbul under guard."⁴⁶ Although he died soon after his arrival, the Timurid prince was an honored guest at the Ottoman court, and his presence there has been tied to the entrance of Timurid manuscripts into the Topkapı treasury.⁴⁷

More than any other figure, however, Mır Ali-Sher Nawa'i aroused Ottoman curiosity and pride in their Central Asian origins. As the creator of a classical Turkish language that became the literary vehicle for Turkish cultural expression in Central Asia, the poet—before reaching the age of forty—had written many works that were read widely in Istanbul court circles. His prose and poetry served as a much-imitated model for the development of Ottoman literature, as evidenced by its influence on the writings of Bakhti, Lami'i, Chelebi, Shaykhi Beg, Latifi, and others. His prestige among the Ottoman elite was strengthened by the arrival of refugees from the court of Sultan-Husayn. One of these was the poet Bihishti, who fell out of favor with the Ottoman Sultan Bayezid II (r. 1481–1512) and fled to the Herat court, eventually returning to Istanbul with Sultan-Husayn's ambassador armed with letters of intercession from both Jami and Mır Ali-Sher.⁴⁸

The cultural aims of the Ottoman court at the beginning of the sixteenth century were further sharpened by a familiarity with large numbers of Timurid works of art. This bounty could have reached Istanbul by any number of avenues. The Ottoman raids on Safavid Tabriz during the first half of the century were undoubtedly responsible for the majority of Timurid objects now housed in the Topkapı Sarayı Museum, Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, and Istanbul University Library. But the presence of Timurid art began earlier, as evidenced by exchanges during the fifteenth century between the Ottoman and Timurid courts. For example, Mehmed II sent books to the poet Jami,⁴⁹ while manuscripts from Herat were sent as gifts to both Mehmed II and Bayezid II.⁵⁰

fig. 105

Ivory

Istanbul c. 1525–26

Ivory

15 x 10.5 x 10.5 cm

Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Treasury

A. 1104

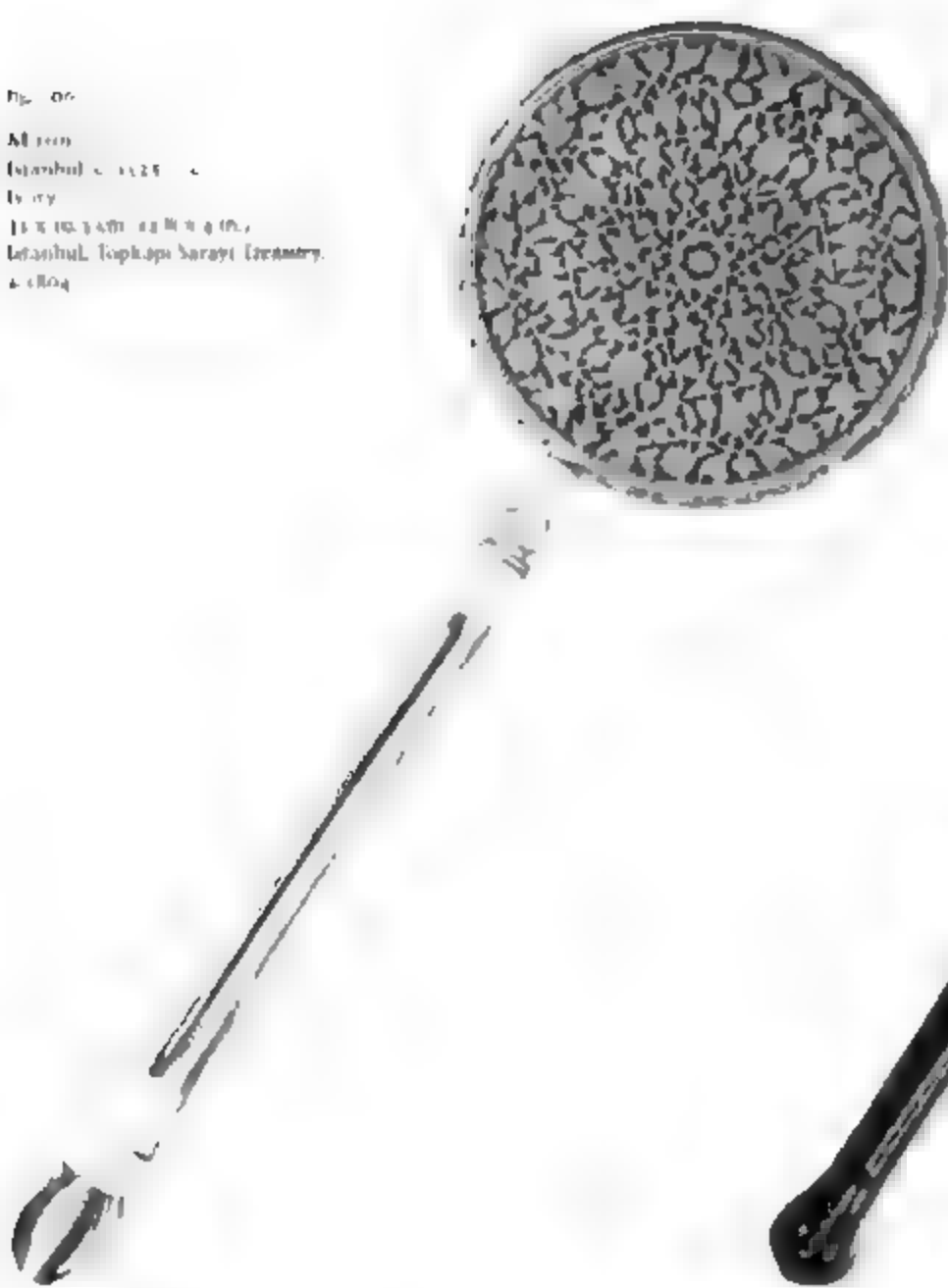


fig. 106

Ivory

Istanbul dated 950 AH (1548–49)

Ivory

15 x 10.5 x 10.5 cm

Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Treasury

A. 1105



Through these channels Timurid objects, like Ulugh-Beg's carved wooden box (cat. no. 49), undoubtedly influenced Ottoman court arts. Two exquisitely carved Ottoman ivory mirrors of the second quarter of the sixteenth century (figs. 105–6), one made for Sultan Süleyman I (r. 1520–66), are remarkably similar in carving technique and decorative vocabulary to work done a century earlier in wood for the Timurid prince.⁵¹ Other objects more characteristic of Timurid taste, such as the dragon-handled jade vessel (fig. 107) now in Copenhagen, reflect the Ottoman response. While the jade may be a Timurid original or an Ottoman imitation—its heavy form seems more reminiscent of early Ottoman jades—the Ottoman esteem for this archetypal Timurid object is revealed by the gold and gem incrustation applied in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century by Ottoman artisans. Timurid jades

appear to have had but a brief impact on Ottoman jade carving,⁵² yet they retained value by their powerful evocation of princely prestige from the distant lands of Central Asia.

These minglings between the two dynasties also influenced the Ottoman arts of the book. Ottoman *tadhkiras*, such as that of Mustafa Ali, cite earlier Timurid figures as models in their discussions of painters and patrons, using the same literary conceits and style of Timurid biographers. Timurid historiography, for example, with its highly successful strategies of rhetorical, grandiose language and widespread genealogical manipulation, served as a model for later Ottoman literary efforts to secure their own niche in the ruling traditions of the Muslim east. Works like the *Zafarnama* of Yazdi or the *Majma' al-tawarikh* would have been effective prototypes for the dynastic propa-

ganda disseminated through the Ottomans' own rich tradition of illustrated historical manuscripts.⁵¹ The "international Timurid style," including Timurid ideals and methods of manuscript production, was adopted by Ottoman ateliers, much of it transmitted via the Turcoman tradition and the circulation of books, artists, and calligraphers. An unmistakable Timurid influence is particularly evident in fifteenth-century Ottoman illumination, in which versions of both early Timurid Shiraz and Herat illumination can be found.⁵²

Yet from its origins in the late fifteenth century Ottoman manuscript painting and later drawing was not indebted strictly to Iranian traditions but involved a synthesis of various traditions. A highly controlled court art, Ottoman painting in its glorification of the ruling house was influenced by the Timurid model but presented a distinctly more literal view. It eschewed the lyrical, metaphorical idiom favored in the Timurid *kitabkhana* for a more realistic one that concentrated on contemporary events. The Ottoman atelier nonetheless incorporated into its production both Turcoman and Timurid artistic notions, their work inspired by the vast amounts of technical material that are now pasted into the Istanbul albums. *Saz* (reed pen drawing), perhaps the greatest aesthetic achievement of the Ottoman atelier during the sixteenth century, is indirectly derived from Timurid drawings in these albums.⁵³

Ottoman architecture's grand imperial aims in both the early capital of Bursa and Istanbul were also influenced by Timurid works. *Cuerda seca* tilework, a technique known at Timurid Samarkand in the late fourteenth century, was used at Bursa in the early fifteenth century. An example of its bold, colorful effect is the interior decoration of the famed Green Mosque, which includes an elaborately designed *mihrab* (niche indicating the direction of prayer) with molded tiles. An inscription in the mosque states that the decoration was completed in 1424 by Naqqash Ali, a native of Bursa who spent many years in Central Asia after being carried off by Timur in 1402.⁵⁴

Further Timurid influence on Ottoman architectural decoration can be found in the album F.1423 now in Istanbul University Library, a compilation evidently made for Mehmed II. It includes a number of curious painted designs that are likely Ottoman interpretations of motifs widely used in Timurid *kitabkanas*. Some of the arabesque florals, almost literal copies, were

applied to the carved wooden doors of a building made for Mehmed II at the Topkapı Sarayı, and a number of these designs have been attributed to a painter captured by Timur in 1402 who returned to the Ottoman court after training in Samarkand.⁵⁵

There is no more startling Ottoman appropriation of the Timurid idea, however, than the *Chinili Köşk* (Tiled Kiosk; fig. 108) built in 1472 at the Topkapı Sarayı. Contemporary descriptions of the Ottoman palace during the reign of Mehmed II make numerous references to three pavilions in the "paradise-like" gardens⁵⁶—each built respectively in a Persian, Ottoman, and Greek (Byzantine) style—but only the *Chinili Köşk* survives. The renown of this building can be deduced from numerous Ottoman panegyrical poems that describe it in paradisaical terms. In essence a Timurid building, it is unlike anything else in Ottoman architecture.

An experiment in the fifteenth-century international Timurid style, the *Chinili Köşk* appears to be the work of Karamanian artisans from Konya and Laranda resettled in Istanbul by the sultan's order in 1466. Typically Timurid in terms of its cruciform layout, mode of construction, and tile decoration, it represents Timurid architectural concepts perhaps translated through a Karamanian cultural framework, whose long tradition of tile production and building was probably influenced by Timurid architecture.⁵⁷

While the *Chinili Köşk* was probably used as a



fig. 107

Cup
Turkey(?), d. 1600
Ivory
5.8 x 11.8 cm (2 1/4 x 4 5/8 in.)
Copenhagen, The National Museum of
Denmark, Ec 18



Fig. 108

Çırağan Köşkü
Istanbul 1472

royal pleasure pavilion, its wider meaning becomes clear when viewed in the context of the Topkapı Sarayı's ingeniously heterodox building program, one that subordinated unity to variety. The garden pavilions, built in the architectural modes of conquered kingdoms and juxtaposed to one in the Ottoman style, can be seen as symbols of the incorporation of these territories into the centralized Ottoman state. This notion of victory inherent in Mehmed's pavilions was clear to contemporary observers, who consistently compare them with royal tents (possession of the tent of a defeated monarch was commonly recognized as a symbol of victory).⁴⁰ The Çinili Köşk specifically signaled the appropriation of Karaman,⁴¹ a longtime thorn in the Ottoman side. The explicit Timurid forms and associations of the building, however, project other meanings. Its tile-sheathed form suggests the princely pleasure and grandeur of the Ottoman's distant Central Asian associations and symbolically proclaims the Ottomans' assimilation of the Timurid dream by its inclusion in Mehmed's microcosmic vision of his empire.

In the eyes of Zahiruddin Babur, the great Timurid empire he founded in South Asia in the early sixteenth century was not the creation of a new dynasty but rather a revival of the house of Timur. In both Iran and Central Asia the once-proud dynasty of his ancestors stood in ruins. The cumulative effect of the Uzbek conquest of Herat and his two aborted occupations of Samarkand had brought this Timurid prince to the brink of surrender and disillusionment: "Strangers and ancient foes, such as Shaibaq Khan and the Auzbegs, are in possession of all the countries once held by Timur Beg's descendants; even where Turks and Chaghatays survive in corners and borderlands, they have all joined the Auzbeg, willingly or with aversion; one remains, I myself, in Kabul, the foe mightily strong, I very weak, with no means of making terms, no strength to oppose."⁴²

Babur's decision to turn south toward Hindustan (India) was a momentous one, for it began the final chapter of Timurid history. A precedent for the dynasty's claim to India had already been established by Timur's 1398 invasion. After rebuilding his power in Kabul, Babur and his followers in 1526 seized Islamic northern India at the battle of Panipat, thus securing a

foothold for what would become commonly known as the Mughal empire.

A Persian variation of the word *Mongol*, *Mughal* was applied to the Timurids when they arrived in India because of their association with the Mongol traditions of Central Asia, but the term was equally used by the Timurids to distinguish themselves from other Muslims in India. Timurid, however, is the correct name of the dynasty. Babur, the son of a petty Timurid ruler of Ferghana and through his mother a descendant of Chaghatai Khan, never considered himself and his followers anything but Timurids.⁴³

Babur's invasion of India was restricted for the most part to Timurid domains in the Afghan mountains until 1555, when his son Humayun (r. 1530–56) firmly established Timurid authority at Delhi and Agra. The dominant culture they encountered in northern India was Muslim and highly developed but also unmistakably Indian. Through diplomatic maneuvering and military skills the Timurids eventually forged a new alignment of Muslims and non-Muslims that led to a synthesis of Timurid ideals of rule with those of Hindu and pre-Timurid Muslim India. With the creation of a social and political climate that permitted Hindus to participate more fully in the administration and culture of a Muslim state, the Timurids embarked on a course that profoundly transformed the dynasty, significantly distinguishing it from its other imperial Muslim rivals and setting the stage for a brilliant series of new cultural expressions.

The empire was largely the work of Humayun's son Akbar (r. 1556–1605), and significant artistic and social advances occurred under his rule. His motives and the dynasty's objectives remained traditionally Timurid. Keenly aware of his origins—he traced his ancestry back to Chingiz Khan as well as Timur—Akbar retained the old Mongol-Timurid notion of centralized power; he envisioned the machinery of state as one great army under his complete personal control. His efforts to ensure his personal authority led to the implementation of economic, administrative, and military structures and practices that created a wealthy, powerful, absolutist state that endured for centuries. Traditional Timurid ploys such as pandering to Islamic principles and economic manipulation of official and popular religious classes were seen as both effective and necessary stratagems to secure legitimation of rule.

Akbar's powerful, expedient vision of empire, however, realized that the success of the state, while Islamic in power and foundation, also depended on the support of the Hindu population. Consequently he attempted to enfranchise Hindus. His policies of religious tolerance not only consolidated the dynasty's grip on India but profoundly altered the cultural history of its adopted land.⁶⁴

The new intellectual and spiritual diversity that marked Timurid rule in India was most clearly realized at court. At least as important as the dynasty's political and religious innovations was its inherited cultural sophistication, which traditionally viewed the court and its high artistic activities as expressions of power. It is no surprise then that the Persianate tradition dominated Timurid cultural life in India, the Persian language replacing Turki during the second half of the sixteenth century. Members of the ruling house exercised their prerogative of patronage on a grand scale, gathering artists and craftsmen to the imperial kitabkhana from all corners of the Muslim world as well as Hindu India. The cosmopolitan and enlightened atmosphere of the court encouraged a massive outpouring of works of art and architecture that combined traditions as diverse as Hindu India, Safavid Iran, and Christian Europe.

The new Timurid cultural vision emerging in India near the end of the sixteenth century was not impervious to the mythical proportions of its own cultural heritage, and that legacy affected royal notions of patronage and artistic production in two important ways. Foremost was the retention of old emblems and devices of dynastic power—titles, court practices, and works of art—from their homelands. These elements had internal resonances for the Timurids in India and were not artificial appropriations, as they had been for the Uzbeks, Safavids, and Ottomans. The presence of past dynastic symbols of greatness served as reminders of their exalted lineage and history of rule; the age and distant origins of the many Timurid objects brought to India, in fact, often further enhanced their aura as dynastic icons.

Secondly, the presence of Timurid regalia at the Indian court encouraged attitudes toward patronage and its uses that recalled earlier Timurid conceptions of culture. Dynastic art created on the subcontinent assumed a central role in the propagation of a new and

fundamentally different Timurid power. Like the earlier synthesis of Iranian, Central Asian, and Chinese traditions that took place under Shahrukh, the Indian Timurids recognized the political expediency of an inclusive cultural policy.

The memoirs of Indian Timurid rulers demonstrate this fascination with their ancestors. Babur's autobiography, written in Turki, in many instances provides the best evidence available on Timurid affairs in Samarqand and Herat as well as the splendor of court life under the princes. Babur imagined Timurid Herat under Sultan-Husayn as occupying the central position in the Islamic world, a view frequently found by romanticized descriptions of his ancestor's court. A boasting point-by-point comparison of his own capture of Samarqand with Sultan-Husayn's conquest of Herat in 1470 clearly seeks to place Babur on an equal footing with his revered ancestor.⁶⁵

Babur's military actions, like the erection of pillars of heads,⁶⁶ seem pointed recollections of Timur's exploits. A perceived slight at the hands of the more sophisticated Badi'uzzaman during a visit to Herat, for instance, triggered a proud demand for the respect due a true Timurid warrior and defender of the house of Timur: "Small though my age was, my place of honour was large; that I had seated myself twice on the throne of our forefathers in Samarqand by blow straightdealt; and that to be laggard in shewing me respect was unreasonable, since it was for this (Timurid) dynasty's sake I had thus fought and striven with that alien foe."⁶⁷

This dynamic figure from the Timurid backwaters of Ferghana took his dynasty's refined cultural responsibilities and expectations seriously as well. A keen enthusiast of poetry, Babur engaged in considerable dueling in verse, even venturing sharp criticisms of the works of Mir Ali-Sher.⁶⁸ His memoirs, one of the great royal literary efforts of any time, were translated into Persian and illustrated at Akbar's court, thus bringing to life for later generations the dynasty's most immediate Timurid link.

When one turns to the memoirs of Akbar's son Nuruddin Muhammad Jahangir (r. 1605–27), the memories of his fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Timurid ancestors assume new intensities. This is particularly apparent in Jahangir's discussion of his search for dynastic memorabilia, an obsession that often entailed years of pursuit and delicate negotiations. A

number of the objects he treasured most were diplomatic gifts from his "brother," the rival Safavid Shah Abbas I of Iran.⁶⁹ Among them was a ruby engraved with the titles of Ulugh-Beg, to which Jahangir added his own name; an astrolabe, which had belonged to the same Timurid prince; and a painting of Timur's battle with Toqtamish Khan, inscribed to Khalil Mirza Shahrukhi. This last rarity, with 240 figures, greatly pleased Jahangir, whose subsequent comments on its virtues reflect a desire to flaunt his knowledge of the dynasty's painting tradition.⁷⁰ A purported Frankish (European) picture of Timur did not pass Jahangir's scrutiny, though the emperor remarked that if it had been a picture of his ancestor, "no better gift could be presented to me."⁷¹

Jahangir also sought to affirm his Timurid ancestry through genealogies, seals, and inscriptions.⁷² During a visit to Kabul, for example, he twice ordered his name and Timur's inscribed on stone monuments.⁷³ This link was further reinforced in carved jades; he shared his ancestors' taste for this hardstone, and a number of Timurid examples, like one at the British Museum (cat. no. 126) and the Ulugh-Beg jug (fig. 46), found their way to India, where the names of Jahangir and sometimes his son Shahjahan were added.⁷⁴

The latter jug, or one similar to it, appears to have been described in the year 1613 by Jahangir:

Munis Khan, son of Mihtar Khan, presented me with a jug of jasper (jade), which had been made in the reign of Mirza Ulugh Beg Gurgan, in the honoured name of that prince. It was a very delicate rarity and of a beautiful shape. Its stone was exceedingly white and pure. Around the neck of the jar they had carved the auspicious name of the Mirza and the Hijra year in *nigā'* character. I ordered them to inscribe my name and the auspicious name of Akbar on the edge of the lip of the jar.⁷⁵

Symbolic of Timurid princely charisma, this revered jug was passed on to Shahjahan (r. 1628–57), who added an inscription in 1646 in which he styled himself the "Second Lord of the [Auspicious] Conjunction," a direct reference to Timur, who called himself, the "[First] Lord of the [Auspicious] Conjunction."⁷⁶

The Mughals' need to affirm their origins was also manifested in a passionate interest in books. Under Akbar the kitabkhana became a center of manuscript

production and storage in which the dynasty simultaneously elaborated its imperial principles and cultural interests. Among its rich and varied contents no manuscripts were deemed more precious than Timurid ones, which arrived by various means, many certainly at the behest of bibliophiles like Babur and Humayun. The vast number of Timurid books that bear marks of ownership by Mughal princes strongly suggests the existence of a conscious program of acquisition. Included are monuments of Timurid painting like Sultan-Husayn's *Zafarnama* (cat. no. 147) and Muhammad-Juki's *Shahnama* (cat. no. 43). The latter carries the seals of rulers from Babur to Shahjahan with an inscription in the latter's hand recording that the manuscript entered his library on the day of his accession. This treasure trove of Timurid books, like crown jewels, were perceived as part of the ruling elites' imperial charisma: symbols of current rule and reminders of a fabled past.⁷⁷

More important to contemporary Timurid concerns was the kitabkhana's production capabilities. The illustrated manuscripts produced during Akbar's reign reflect both the dynasty's philosophy of rule and contemporary politico-cultural alignments in India. The arrival of the artists Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdul-Samad from the court of Shah Tahmasp around the middle of the sixteenth century reflects Humayun's interest in Safavid culture and helped move Indian painting in a dramatically different direction.

The naturalism and attention to detail already apparent in Babur's memoirs were further elicited in subsequent Mughal painting under the influence of these two artists. Their talents for accurate observation and ornament were soon merged with their new patrons' desires for portraiture and detailed re-creation of physical reality, qualities absent in pre-Mughal Indian painting. Occasionally the new painting looked back: a painting by Bihzad of two camels fighting (c. 1525), which had belonged to Akbar, was copied around 1585 (fig. 109) by Abdul-Samad (for his own son intriguingly named Bihzad), thus acknowledging in the new visual mode the continued appeal of past Timurid triumphs.

Akbar viewed contemporary painting as a formal gesture of his personal majesty, and the wide range of texts illustrated for the emperor reveal an active conception of his role as the empire's chief cultural arbiter.

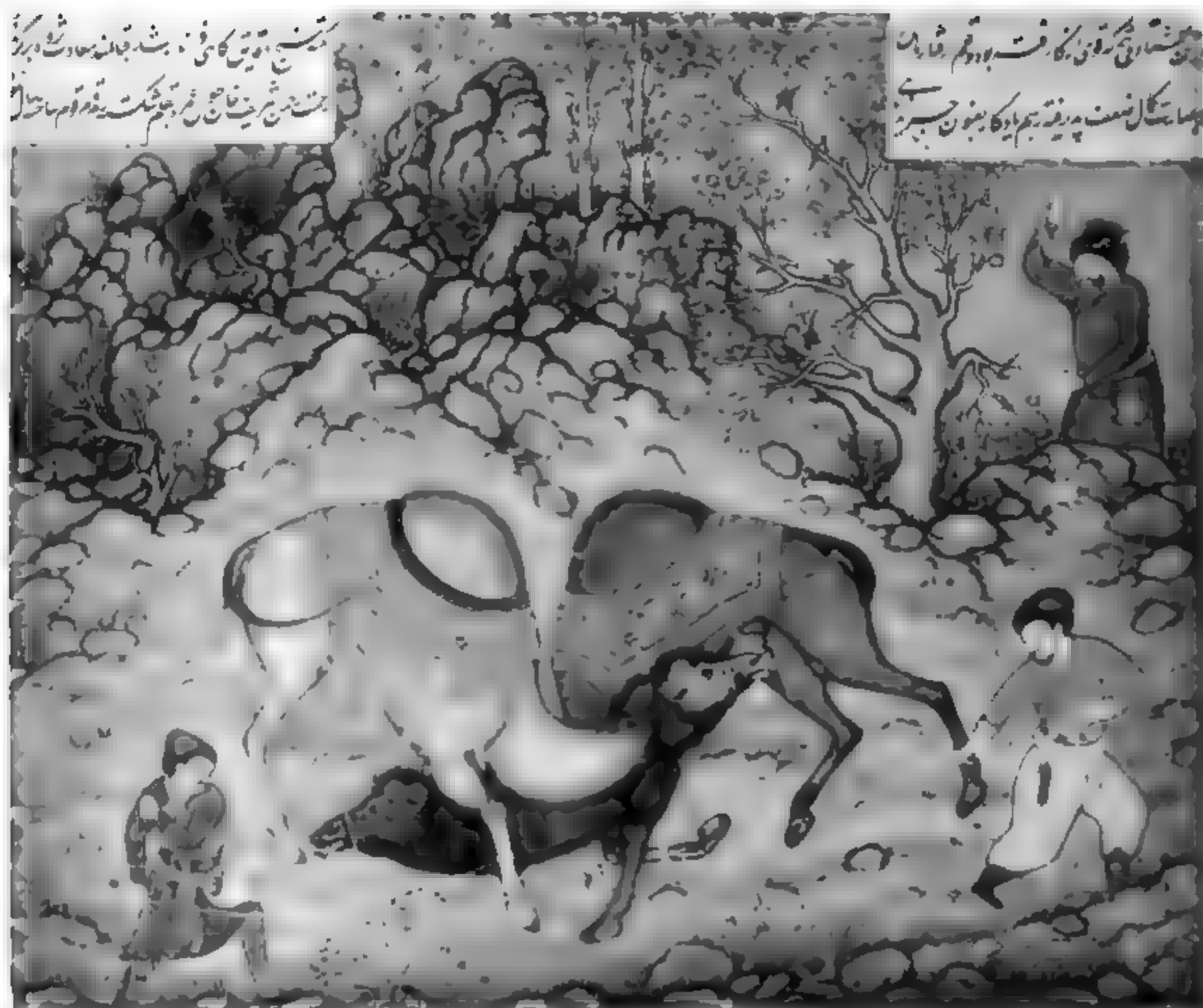


Fig. 109

"Two Camels Fighting"

Signed by Abdul-Samad

Mughal, c. 1585

Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper

18.8 x 20.4 cm (7 1/2 x 8 in.)

Hansem Khurovati Collection

Histories written for the emperor, both specifically dynastic and general, detail at great length and with profuse illustration the Mughals' official view of their lineage. These manuscripts contain painting that is dramatic, expressive, and convincing in its details; figures inhabit space with a naturalism only hinted at in late Timurid painting, and its accurate depiction and realistic palette raised visual reportage to new levels in the Islamic world. Significant among those manuscripts are the *Tarikh-i alfi* (Millennial history), the *Tarikh-i khandan-i Timuriyya* (History of the Timurid dynasty),

the *Chingiznama* (History of Chingiz Khan), the *Baburnama* (History of Babur), and the *Akbarnama* (History of Akbar).

These books depended to varying extents on earlier Timurid notions of illustrated historical manuscripts, including size, compositional formulae (including double-page paintings), and even the occasional duplication of figures. Like earlier Timurid historical works, these Indian histories reflect the dynasty's need for a private visual propaganda that glorified and consequently justified their rule.⁷⁴

Of particular interest in this regard are the opening chapters of the official history of Akbar's reign, the *Akbarnama*, in which the emperor's lineage is traced to the mythical Mongol queen Alanqoa, who figured prominently in Timur's own genealogy at the Gur-i Amir. The divine light that impregnated this ancestress was believed to have endowed her progeny, including Chingiz Khan, Timur, and Babur, with unique spiritual qualities. This connection was given special credence by the Mughals, who saw it as an effective source of legitimacy that set their claim to India apart from those of their rivals. Their notion of history and its contemporary applications was also encouraged by the last great Timurid historian, Khwandamir (d. 1535), who in 1528 departed for India, where he spent the remainder of his life under the protection of Babur and Humayun.

The Indian Timurids clearly showed a penchant for depicting their ancestors in painting. An early example of this trend is the celebrated *Princes of the House of Timur*, executed during Humayun's reign.⁷⁹ The glorification of lineage reached new heights under Jahangir's patronage, when the formal impact of Timurid aesthetic ideals had their greatest effect on Mughal painting. These ideals became associated with the pronounced cultivation of Jahangir's court; the new, hyper-refined sensibility is obvious in early seventeenth-century manuscripts like the *Rothschild Bستان* and the *Gulistan*,⁸⁰ as well as in a series of formal portraits of Jahangir. A number of these portraits feature Jahangir with the rulers of rival states, including Shah Abbas I of Iran, James I of Great Britain, and the Ottoman sultan of Turkey; they portray the Timurid emperor as the dominant figure, basking in the refulgence of an enormous halo, a likely allusion to the light of Alanqoa transmitted through his ancestors (figs. 110–11).⁸¹

Indian Timurid artistic concern with the dynasty's past climaxed in the reign of Shahjahan. Shahjahan's obsessive concern with a formal presentation of his rule approximated in many respects the flawless, visual facade constructed under Shahrukh. Painting during his reign, particularly portraiture, achieved a perfection that functioned as a kind of heraldic art, its static figures and objects symbols of dynastic ideals. The Alanqoan light, formalized as a halo during Jahangir's reign, was a consistent feature in Shahjahan's portraits;



fig. 110

"Jahangir's Dream"

Signed by Abu'l-Hasan

Mughal, c. 1618–22

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper

24.1 x 25.2 cm (9 1/2 x 10 in.)

Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art, 45.9



fig. 111

"Jahangir Enthroned on an Hourglass"

Mughal, c. 1625

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper

25.4 x 28.1 cm (10 x 11 in.)

Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art, 45.15a

the link it provided with earlier Timurids was even more emphatically stated in a number of enthronement scenes that feature Timur surrounded by his descendants Babur, Humayun, Akbar, and Jahangir.⁸² Like his father, Shahjahan also dispatched funds to Samarqand for the upkeep of the Gur-i Amir.⁸³

124 Shahjahan's cultivation of other interests that his ancestors shared, like carved jades and gems, is well known, but none competed with his devotion to monumental architecture. The crowning glory of his reign is the Taj Mahal (fig. 112), which was built at Agra between 1631 and 1648 and served as a mausoleum for his wife Mumtaz Mahal as well as himself. Situated on the northern boundary of a large *bagh*, this most celebrated of all Indian buildings rises majestically from a massive plinth, its snow-white marble surfaces and great double dome expanding from a vertical drum. Flanked by minarets at the four corners, the central structure's gleaming exterior is punctuated by restrained *pietra dura* decoration (a technique featuring inlaid semiprecious stones) and long Koranic inscriptions in black marble.

The Taj Mahal is paradoxically also considered the crowning achievement of Iranian architecture. Its source was not contemporary Safavid building but Timurid architecture of the late fifteenth century, whose forms were crystallized on Indian soil in the first major structure produced under Timurid rule in India, the tomb of Humayun at Delhi, built by order of Akbar between 1562 and 1571.⁸⁴

The architect of Humayun's tomb had worked in Herat, Bukhara, and elsewhere in India before undertaking the mausoleum and clearly modeled the monument after late Timurid examples like the Ishratkhana at Shahr-i Sabz (1464) and the tomb of Ulugh-Beg and Abdul-Razzaq at Ghazni (c. 1502).⁸⁵ At Delhi different materials and increased scale imparted to these forms a powerful new effect, and during the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir Timurid forms, functions, and decorative notions were further exploited in other architectural projects.⁸⁶ The mosque at Din-panah, for example, features elaborate *pietra dura* inlays that probably represent an attempt to re-create Timurid mosaic tile compositions. With its dramatic size and Timurid orientation Humayun's tomb was a formal symbol of the dynasty; Shahjahan's decision to emulate this building by constructing the Taj Mahal confirms that it re-

mained a potent embodiment of Timurid glory.

Retrospective in character, the Taj Mahal represents a distillation of the ideals of Timurid architecture, in both plan and function.⁸⁷ Certain details, such as the inlaid halo atop Shahjahan's tombstone in the crypt, seem to be direct evocations of his Timurid heritage. New and old features from the architectural traditions of Iran, Central Asia, and India were combined to enhance the public, almost propagandistic, functions of the tomb. The plan of the main chamber, like Humayun's tomb, is essentially an architectural form that was developed in Timurid Iran.⁸⁸ The inclusion of an ambulatory, usually accorded to saints rather than ordinary mortals, was intended to heighten the uniqueness of the royal personage and further exalted the dynasty's status.⁸⁹ If painting provided the Timurids in India with a private affirmation of their dynastic origins and aspirations, large architectural undertakings like the Taj Mahal were public declarations of their power.

During the sixteenth century new political, religious, and technological developments made obsolete the Mongol ideal, which had been integral to Timurid ideology. The power and wealth generated by massive land holdings, extended commercial networks, and more lethal, modernized armies set aspirations far beyond those born of the steppe where the Uzbeks remained. As a consequence the mighty states that emerged in Iran, Turkey, and India relegated the Timurids to the realm of cultural myth. Although the forms and principles of Timurid art spawned further developments, the new art of these empires assumed more specific indigenous meanings as earlier associations with the Timurids were either altered or forgotten. Instead it was the legacy of Timurid patrons, most often embodied in their artists or the objects they created, that took on an almost totemic appeal in the next century. By either consciously emulating the Timurids' achievements or taking possession of their artists and objects, the new imperial patrons assured the lasting glorification of the house of Timur.

fig. 112

Taj Mahal
Agra, c. 1631–48



NOTES

1. "Khwandamar's *Ḥabīb al-Sayr*," in Wheeler Thackston, *A Century of Princes. Sources on Timurid History and Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, in press).

2. H. R. Roemer, "Timur in Iran," in *The Cambridge History of Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 6: p. 125.

3. Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilber, *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 1 xviii.

4. B. W. Robinson, "The Turkman School to 1503," in *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia: 14th-16th Centuries*, ed. Basil Gray (Boulder: Shambhala, 1979), pp. 215-47.

5. Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 1 16, 25.

6. For the Uzbeks, see the bibliographical references in Maria Eva Subtelny, "Art and Politics in Early 16th Century Central Asia," *Central Asiatic Journal* 27, nos. 1-2 (1981): 122-48.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 132-33.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 133-34.

9. See Robert Hillenbrand, "Safavid Architecture," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, 6: 824, for references to Soviet research in this area.

10. Subtelny, "Art and Politics," pp. 134-35.

11. Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, *Baburnama*, trans. Annette Susannah Beveridge (London: Luzac & Co., 1971), p. 329.

12. Subtelny, "Art and Politics," pp. 136-17.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 139-45.

14. *Irshād az-zarā'ih of Qasim b. Yusuf Abu Na'iri Harawi*, ed. Muhammad Mushiri (Tehran, 1968).

15. Mukaddema Mukhtarovna Ashraf-Aini, "The School of Bukhara to c. 1550," in Gray, ed. *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia*, p. 260.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 262 (Tashkent, Ivan UZSSR, ms. 1995).

17. For these campaigns, see Martin R. Dickson, "Shah Tahmasp and the Uzbeks (The Duel for Khorasan with Ubayd Khan 940-946/1524-1540)," Ph.D. diss. (Princeton University, 1958).

18. Basil Gray, *Persian Painting* (Geneva: Skira, 1961), pp. 147-49.

19. Martin Bernard Dickson and Stuart Cary Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 1 37-39.

20. B. W. Robinson, "An Unpublished Manu-

script of the *Gulistan of Sa'di*," *Sonderdruck, Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte Asiens* (Istanbul, 1963), p. 226.

21. As quoted in Ashraf-Aini, "The School of Bukhara," p. 264.

22. Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, 3: 23.

23. Roger Savory, *Iran under the Safavids* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 13-15, it is claimed that Shahrukh also visited Ardabil in an effort to secure spiritual blessings.

24. See *The Cambridge History of Iran* 6, chapters 14 (698-727), 15b (759-842), 17c (948-64), 18 (965-94), Linda Komaroff, "Timurid to Safavid Iran: Continuity and Change," *Mosyus* 20 (1979-80): 11-16, Leo Bronshteyn, "Decorative Woodwork of the Islamic Period," *A Survey of Persian Art from Prehistoric Times to the Present*, ed. Arthur Upham Pope and Phyllis Ackerman (Tehran: Soroush Press, 1964), 6: 2622-24.

25. This information concerning Timurid-Safavid contacts is from Dickson and Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh*, 1: 259, n. 5.

26. Robert Skelton, "The Relations between the Chinese and Indian Jade Carving Traditions," in *The Westward Influence of the Chinese Arts*, ed. William Watson, *Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia*, no. 3 (London: University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, Percival David Foundation, 1971), p. 103; Cengiz Köseoglu, *The Topkapı Sarayı Museum: The Treasury*, trans. and ed. J. M. Rogers (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1987), p. 52, ill. 48.

27. *Ibid.*, see also M. Bahrami, "Chinese Porcelains from Ardebil in the Tehran Museum," *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* (London: Oriental Ceramic Society, 1952), 25-26, 29, for two Chinese jade vessels dedicated by Shah Abbas I to the Ardabil shrine.

28. *Diwan of Shah Isma'il*, c. 1520, Vever Collection, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, S.86.0060. See Wheeler M. Thackston, "The *Diwan of Khata'i*: Pictures for the Poetry of Shah Isma'il," *Asian Art* 1, no. 4 (Fall 1988): 37-63.

29. Dickson and Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh*, 1: 240, n. 11.

30. V. Minorsky, trans., *Calligraphers and Painters. A Treatise by Qasim Ahmad, Son of Mir Munshi* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery Publications, Smithsonian Institution, 1959), pp. 181-82.

31. Topkapı Sarayı Library, H. 2154, f. 1b; see Dickson and Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh*, 1: 41, fig. 43.

32. Tahmasp's arrival at Tabriz in May 1522 is known, but the date of Bihzad's decree (April

24, 1522) and the artist's actual arrival at court are debated. Artistic evidence, however, places his arrival no later than shortly after Tahmasp's accession in May 1524, see Dickson and Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh*, 1: 52-53.

33. Quoted from Mirza Muhammad Qazwini and L. Bouvat, "Deux documents inédits relatifs à Behzad," *Revue du monde musulman* 26 (1914): 159-62, trans. Wheeler Thackston.

34. Dickson and Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh*, 1: 34.

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 4-48.

36. Vever Collection, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, S.86.0035.

37. Topkapı Sarayı Library, H. 2154, ff. 40b, 46a (Shah-Muzaffar); ff. 71a, 83b, 112a, 119b (Bihzad).

38. Minorsky, *Calligraphers and Painters*, pp. 183-84.

39. Wheeler Thackston, "Calligraphers and Copyists of the Timurid and Early Safavid Periods (A.H. 800-950)," and "Artists & Artisans," typescripts, 1987.

40. In addition to a *Maṣnawī al-tawarrūḥ* of Hafiz-i Abru (A. H. Morton, "The Ardabil Shrine in the Reign of Shah Tahmasp I," *Iran* 12 [1974]: 35), at least nine early and late Timurid manuscripts donated to the shrine by Shah Abbas now reside in the State Public Library in Leningrad (nos. 56, 312, 338, 394, 407, 417, 456, 440, 560); see B. Dorn, *Catalogue des manuscrits et xylographes orientaux de la Bibliothèque Impériale Publique de St. Petersbourg* (St. Petersburg: L'Académie Impériale des Sciences, 1852).

41. Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, 3: 100-101.

42. Eleazar Birnbaum, "The Ottomans and Chaghatay Literature: An Early 16th Century Manuscript of Nava'i's *Divan* in Ottoman Orthography," *Central Asiatic Journal* 20, no. 3 (1976): 160-61.

43. *Ibid.*, pp. 162-63.

44. *Ibid.*, pp. 163-64. Appended to the *Kutadgu Bilig* manuscript are Turkic verses in Uighur script copied by the scribe Abdul-Razzaq Bakhshi, responsible for numerous other known works in Chaghatay (Turki) and Uighur script.

45. Istanbul University Library, F.1423, f. 35b, trans. Wheeler Thackston.

46. *Ferdun Mansest* (i, 405), as translated and quoted in Dickson and Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh*, 1: 239-40, n. 5.

47. Zeki Velidi Togan, *On the Miniatures in Istanbul Libraries*, Publications of the Faculty of Letters of the University of Istanbul, no. 1304 (Istanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1963), p. 12.

48. Birnbaum, "The Ottomans and Chaghatay Literature," pp. 163–68.
49. Franz Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*, trans. Ralph Manheim, ed., William C. Hickman, Bollingen Series no. 96, reprint, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978, p. 301.
50. Togan, *Miniatures*, pp. 27, 36.
51. See Eain Atıl, *The Age of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C. National Gallery of Art, 1987), p. 138–40.
52. Robert Skelton, "Characteristics of Later Turkish Jade Carving," *Fifth International Congress of Turkish Art*, ed. G. Fehér (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1978), pp. 793–97.
53. See Eleanor Sims, "The Turks and Illustrated Historical Texts," in *ibid.*, pp. 747–72.
54. Edwin Binney, 3rd, *Turkish Treasures from the Collection of Edwin Binney, 3rd*, exh. cat. (Portland: Portland Art Museum, 1979), p. 2, cat. no. 1; Sotheby's, April 8, 1975, lot 102, Sotheby's, November 21, 1986, lot 114. See also the illuminated page from a Koran copied for Bayezid II, now in the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon (M.20), illustrated in *The Arts of Islam*, exh. cat., Hayward Gallery (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1976), p. 347, cat. no. 378a.
55. Walter Denny, "Dating Ottoman Turkish Works in the Saz Style," *Muqarnas* 1 (1983), 104, where the Timurid contribution is understated.
56. John Carswell in *Tulips, Arabesques & Turbans* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1982), pp. 74–76, see also Birnbaum, "The Ottomans and Chaghatay Literature," p. 166; Walter Denny, "Points of Stylistic Contact in the Architecture of Islamic Iran and Anatolia," *Islamic Art* 2 (1987) 31–33.
57. We are grateful to Prof. Gülrü Necipoglu-Kafadar of Harvard University for this information and the reference to Süheyl Ünver, *Fatih Devri Saray Nakshahları ve Baba Nakhas Calısmaları* (Istanbul, 1958).
58. Gülrü Necipoglu-Kafadar, "The Formation of an Ottoman Imperial Tradition: The Topkapı Saray Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," Ph.D. diss. (Harvard University, 1986), pp. 175–77, 184–88.
59. *Ibid.*, pp. 180–81.
60. *Ibid.*, pp. 109–10.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
62. Babur, *Baburnama*, p. 340.
63. Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, 3: 62, n. 2, explains how this term was linked with the Timurids in India.
64. These ideas concerning Timurid rule in India are based on Hodgson, in *ibid.*, pp. 59–98.
65. Babur, *Baburnama*, pp. 134–35, 256–93.
66. *Ibid.*, pp. 232, 376.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 299.
68. *Ibid.*, pp. 136–37, 271–72.
69. Glenn Lowry, "Jahangir and Shah Abbas: The Imagery of Dreams," typescript, 1987.
70. Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, or *Memories of Jahangir*, trans. A. Rogers, ed. H. Beveridge (reprint, London, 1909–14), 2: 116.
71. *Ibid.*, 1: 153–54.
72. Lowry, "Jahangir and Shah Abbas"; Eleanor Sims, "The Turks and Illustrated Historical Texts," pp. 753–56.
73. Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, 1: 107–9.
74. Skelton, "Chinese and Indian Jade Carving," p. 102.
75. Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, 1: 146; while the text appears to refer to the Lisbon cup, the latter does not include the Hijra year inscribed on its neck.
76. Lowry, "Jahangir and Shah Abbas," discusses the collection of Timurid objects by later sovereigns in Iran and India.
77. For Timurid works in Akbar's *Ain-i Akbari*, see Michael Brand and Glenn D. Lowry, *Akbar's India: Art from the Mughal City of Victory*, exh. cat. (New York: Asia Society, 1985), pp. 87–92.
78. A detailed discussion of these manuscripts can be found in *ibid.*, pp. 70–79; see also Sims, "The Turks and Illustrated Historical Manuscripts," pp. 754–61.
79. J. M. Rogers, *Islamic Art and Design, 1500–1700*, exh. cat. (London: British Museum, 1983), p. 71, cat. no. 60.
80. Milo Cleveland Beach, *The Grand Mogul: Imperial Painting in India, 1600–1660*, exh. cat. (Williamstown, Mass.: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1978), pp. 66–70.
81. Fig. 107 also served a more specific political purpose. Executed when the Mughals and Safavids were quarreling over the fortress of Qandahar, the painting asserts the Mughals' claim to this traditionally Timurid territory by portraying Shah Abbas engulfed in the Alan-qwan halo of Jahangir. See Lowry, "Jahangir and Shah Abbas."
82. See B. N. Goswami and Eberhard Fischer, *Wonders of a Golden Age: Painting at the Court of the Great Mughals. Indian Art of 16th and 17th Centuries from Collections in Switzerland*, exh. cat. (Zurich: Museum Rietburg, 1987), pp. 90–91; Toby Falk and Mildred Archer, *Indian Miniatures in the Indian Office Library* (London: Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1981), p. 404, no. 83.
83. Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri* 2: 196; John D. Hoag, "The Tomb of Ulugh Beg and Abdu Razzag at Ghazni, a Model for the Taj Mahal," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 27, no. 4 (1968): 246.
84. Glenn D. Lowry, "Humayun's Tomb: Form, Function and Meaning in Early Mughal Architecture," *Muqarnas* 4 (1987): 133–48.
85. Hoag, "The Tomb of Ulugh Beg," pp. 240–43.
86. *Ibid.*, pp. 243–46.
87. *Ibid.*, pp. 246–48; Lisa Golombek, "From Tamerlane to the Taj Mahal," in *Essays in Islamic Art and Architecture in Honor of Katherine Otto-Dorn*, ed. Abbas Daneshvari (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1982), pp. 43–50.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
89. Hoag, "The Tomb of Ulugh Beg," p. 248.

Catalogue

128 Note to the Reader

Entries in the catalogue follow the order in which objects first appear in the chapters. Height precedes width for two-dimensional works of art; height precedes width, which precedes depth, for three-dimensional works of art. Specific information concerning the objects displayed in the exhibition—such as which folio or folios were shown from a manuscript—is given in the list of exhibited items (pp. 362–63). This list also indicates when a work of art was only exhibited at one of the exhibition's two venues.

cat. no. 1 *Nasayih-i Iskandar*

Copied by Ja'far al-Baysunghur
Herat(?), dated A.H. 829 (A.D. 1425)
36 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
19.8 x 10.8 cm (7 7/8 x 4 1/4 in.)
Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library, Ms. 4183

Despite the absence of an ex libris, its small, exquisite format and quality of execution mark this work as typical of manuscript production under Baysunghur. Supporting that attribution is the copyist Ja'far's *nisba*, al-Baysunghuri. This "Second Master of Nasta'liq," whose long career spanned works dating from A.H. 825 to 859, is known to have worked for the prince from 820, although it is not known when he assumed his post as head of Baysunghur's *kitabkhana*.¹ The *Nasayih-i Iskandar* (The counsels of Alexander), attributed to Aristotle, is in reality typical of the didactic genre known in Islamic literature as the Mirror for Princes. Written in a superb *nasta'liq* prose, the book features an illuminated wheel (f. 128) containing definitions of such concepts as justice, state, and kingship. Given the important symbolic role of the prince in his father's government—he served as regent during Shahrukh's absence from Herat—didactic literature emphasizing precepts of rule would be a likely component of Baysunghur's library.

1. Wheeler Thackston, "Calligraphers and Copyists of the Timurid and Early Safavid Periods (A.H. 800–940)," typescript, 1988.

cat. no. 2 *Section of a Koran*

Copied by Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Fazlullah ibn Abdul-Hamid
Maragha, dated A.H. Shawwal 738 (A.D. April–May 1338)
22 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
32.4 x 24.8 cm (12 3/4 x 9 3/4 in.)
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Helen and Alice Colburn Fund, 29.58

Copied in a fluid *nashk* script, this Koran originally consisted of thirty sections (*juz*). The text contained in this volume is from the thirteenth section, *suras* 12–14. At least two other sections of this Koran have been identified.² Although the patron of this manuscript is unknown, it was copied at Maragha while the city was under the control of Amir Hasan Jalayir, a former follower of the Il-Khans, and it is likely that it was made for him.³ The resonant colors, finely scrolling arabesques, and lively floral medallions of the double-page opening of illumination that highlight the beginning of the section, however, are typical of the finest Il-Khanid designs. During the second half of the fourteenth century these designs were incorporated into the visual imagery of the Jalayirid dynasty and ultimately became central to the development of a Timurid vocabulary of forms.

2. A. Welch, *Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World* (New York: Asia Society, 1979), p. 124.

3. *Ibid.*

cat. no. 3 *A Battle between Timur and Toqtamish Khan in 1391*

From a partially dispersed *Zafarnama* of Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi copied by Ya'qub ibn Hasan, known as Siraj al-Husayni al-Sultani, for Ibrahim-Sultan ibn Shahrukh
Shiraz, dated A.H. Dhu'l-Hijja 839
(A.D. June–July 1436)
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
35.5 x 23.8 cm (14 x 9 1/2 in.)
Hashem Khosrovan Collection, T/128

This double-page painting is from one of the copies of the *Zafarnama* (The book of conquest) prepared for Ibrahim-Sultan (cat. no. 29). On June 18, 1391, Timur's army encountered the forces of Toqtamish, the Mongol leader of the Golden Horde, near a northern tributary of the Volga. The painting depicts a critical moment in the battle when Timur's loyal amir, Hajji Sayfuddin, "charged, sword drawn, and broke the left rank of the enemy, which was opposite him, and put them to flight." Toqtamish, realizing his forces were in disarray and "with nothing else to do but wash his hands in fright . . . severed his heart from desires of kingship and empire and in mortal terror fled pell-mell."⁴

4. "Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi's *Zafarnama*," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes: Sources in Timurid History and Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, in press).

cat. no. 4 *Oil Lamp*

Made for the Shrine of Ahmad Yasawi by order of Timur
Central Asia, c. 1397
Brass inlaid with silver and gold
84.5 x 58 (diam.) cm (33 1/4 x 22 3/4 in.)
Leningrad, Courtesy State Hermitage, SA-15931

This is one of six massive oil lamps that Timur commissioned for the Shrine of Ahmad Yasawi in Turkestan. The vessels can be divided into two equal groups depending upon whether they have

cylindrical oil reservoirs, like this lamp, or globular ones. While all the lamps from the shrine are remarkable for their size, similar, smaller vessels have been found at a number of Golden Horde sites.³ The inscriptional program on all the lamps consists of official statements of Timur's protocol and brief prayers. Three of the vessels, including this one, also have on their bases crude inscriptions indicating that they were made by Jazuddin (ibn) Tajuddin Isfahani in A.H. Ramadan 799 (A.D. October 1396). The authenticity of these inscriptions, however, has been questioned recently,⁴ and they probably were added at a later date.

3. Linda Komaroff, "The Timurid Phase in Iranian Metalwork: Formulation and Realization of a Style," Ph.D. diss. (New York University, 1984), pp. 111–34.

4. Anatoli A. Ivanov, "O bronzovykh izdeliakh konca XIV i na nachale khodata Akhmeda Yasavi," in *Sredniaia azia i ee gosudi* (Moscow, 1981), pp. 80, 83.

cat. no. 5A–C Oil Lamp

Made for the Shrine of Ahmad Yasavi by order of Timur
Central Asia, c. 1397
Brass inlaid with silver and gold

A Oil reservoir
22.5 x 23.5 (diam.) cm (8 7/8 x 10 in.)
Paris, Musée du Louvre, Section Islamique,
No. 7080

B Middle section
42.6 x 43.1 (diam.) cm (16 3/4 x 17 in.)
Paris, Musée du Louvre, Section Islamique,
No. 7079

C Base
31 x 57.5 (diam.) cm (12 1/4 x 22 3/4 in.)
Leningrad, Courtesy State Hermitage, SA-12686

Around the end of the nineteenth century this oil lamp was dismembered and divided between the Louvre and the State Hermitage. Like cat. no. 4, it belongs to the group of oil lamps with cylindrical oil reservoirs. The inscription in flowing *thuluth* script on the reservoir can be translated as: "Of what was made on the order of the excellency, the great possessor, the master, the learned, the just, Qurb al-Dunya wa al-Din, Amir Timur Gurgan, may (God) perpetuate his sovereignty." A similar, though lengthier inscription, also in *thuluth* script, adorns the base.

3. Linda Komaroff, "The Timurid Phase," p. 818.

cat. no. 6A–C Three Folios

From a partially dispersed Koran
Central Asia(?), c. 1400–1425
Ink and gold on paper
177 x 101 cm (69 3/4 x 39 3/4 in.)
Geneva, private collection (suras 29:25–27); A.
Soudavar Collection (suras 45:9–13 and 45:13–16)

With their imposing scale and majestic *jali al-muhaqqaq* script these folios are among the most exciting examples of Timurid calligraphy. Although the manuscript from which they were removed is now widely dispersed, eight folios are in the shrine of Imam Riza

at Mashhad. Marginal inscriptions on several of the folios at the shrine attribute the copying of the manuscript to the hand of Bay-sunghur. No other evidence, however, supports this attribution, and its ostentatious size seems more in keeping with the tastes of a patron like Timur.

cat. no. 7A–B Two Architectural Fragments from the Tomb of Buyan Quli Khan

Bukhara, c. 1358–59
Glazed ceramic

A Column and capital
121.3 x 22.9 x 24.4 cm (47 3/4 x 9 x 9 1/2 in.)
London, The Board of Trustees of the Victoria and
Albert Museum, 367–1900, 386–1899

B Frieze
108.9 x 24.8 cm (42 3/4 x 9 3/4 in.)
London, The Board of Trustees of the Victoria and
Albert Museum, 2033–1899

These glazed-tile architectural details are from the mid-fourteenth-century tomb complex of the Mongol lord Buyan Quli Khan. While it is not known when Buyan Quli Khan ordered its construction, it was probably begun shortly before his death about 1358–59.⁸ Originally the entire interior of the tomb, which, like its exterior, is now in poor condition, was covered with carved and glazed tiles; only a few fragments, like this column and frieze, remain. The use of such elaborate tiles appears to have been primarily a Central Asian development as this technique was almost never employed in Iran. The richly detailed patterns that these tiles would have created provided a model for many later fourteenth-century Timurid mausolea, such as the tomb of Amir Husayn ibn Tughluq Tākin (dated A.H. 777 [A.D. 1376]) at the Shah-i Zinda in Samarqand.⁹ The inscription on the frieze is from sura 41:30 of the Koran

8. Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilber, *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 1: 216.

9. Ibid., pp. 240–41.

cat. no. 8 Calligraphic Panel

Samarqand, c. 1405–15
Tile mosaic
70 x 260 cm (27 1/2 x 102 3/4 in.)
Leningrad, Courtesy State Hermitage, AFR-4992

According to the *Zafarnama* of Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi, Timur visited the *madrasa* of his deceased grandson Muhammad-Sultan in A.H. Muharram 807 (A.D. July 1404) and shortly thereafter ordered the construction of an adjacent tomb.¹⁰ After Timur's death at Utrar and the return of his body to Samarqand he was buried at his grandson's recently completed mausoleum. This panel consists of two Arabic inscriptions: a larger one written in white *thuluth*; the other, in amber *kufic*. The former is the more informative and can be translated as: "Resting place of the Sultan of the World, Amir Timur Kūrūgān. May God perfume his dust and make paradise his asylum. Commissioned by the sultan of the age. . . ." Unfortunately the name of the prince who ordered the addition of this

inscription can no longer be determined, but presumably it was either Khalil-Sultan or his cousin Ulugh-Beg, who undertook numerous building and restoration projects in Samarqand during his long tenure there.

10. Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 1, 482–83.

cat. no. 9 *Koran Stand*
Made by Hasan ibn Sulayman al-Isfahani
Central Asia, dated A.H. Dhu'l-Hijja 761
(A.D. November–December 1359)
Wood
130.2 x 41 cm (51 3/4 x 16 1/2 in.)
New York, Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of
Art, Rogers Fund, 1910, 10.218

Koran stands were an integral part of mosques and other religious establishments. According to an inscription on this stand, it was made for a madrasa, though it is not recorded where this establishment was located. The richly carved, spidery tendrils, calligraphic panels, and full blossoms that adorn the stand are remarkable for their vigor. Hasan ibn Sulayman, whose nisba, al-Isfahani, indicates that he was either from or descended from a family from Isfahan, was undoubtedly familiar with Iranian traditions of woodworking, though the stand's carving is clearly related to other fourteenth-century objects from Central Asia, such as the cenotaph of Sayfuddin Bakharzi at Bukhara.

cat. no. 10 *Dragon-Handled Cup*
Siberia, c. 1300–1325
Gold
4.7 x 13 (diam.) cm (1 7/8 x 5 1/8 in.)
Leningrad, Courtesy State Hermitage, SAR-1625

Both the finely worked dragon's head that forms the handle of this vessel and the lotus blossom at the center of its interior are based on early fourteenth-century Chinese models. Similar cups were also produced in silver. On one of these the eyes of the dragon had amethysts set into them, and it is possible that semiprecious or precious stones once formed the eyes of the dragon on this cup as well.

cat. no. 11 *Fish-Handled Bowl*
Tzarevo Gorodische, c. 1250–1350
Gold
12 x 17.8 (diam.) cm (4 3/4 x 7 in.)
Leningrad, Courtesy State Hermitage, SAR-1613

Found in 1847 at the Tzarevo Gorodische archaeological site along the Volga, this large bowl is one of several gold and silver vessels from the Golden Horde that have elaborate handles in the forms of either fish or dragons. Although the specific origin of these bowls remains unknown, they are clearly derived from Chinese models¹⁴ and may have been produced in Central Asia as early as the first quarter of the thirteenth century.¹⁵ Tzarevo, where this vessel was discovered, can be equated with New Saray, the second capital of the Golden Horde, begun during the 1310s. Recent Soviet excava-

tions there have revealed large residences, well-defined streets, and a defensive embankment and trench around the city that was constructed in the 1360s.¹⁶

11. G. A. Fyodorov-Davydov, *The Culture of the Golden Horde Cities*, trans. H. Bartlett Wells, International Series, no. 798 (Oxford: BAR, 1984), p. 189.

12. M. G. Kramarovskiy, "K atribucii zolotoordinakogo kovsha [...]," *Chittim i khazina: izdaniya i stany Dal'nego Vostoka* (Leningrad: Aurora, 1973), pp. 69–79.

13. Ibid., p. 29.

cat. no. 12A–C *Three folios from a Jami' al-tawarikh of Rashiduddin*

Tabriz, dated A.H. 714 (A.D. 1314)
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
43.6 x 29.1 cm (17 1/4 x 11 1/2 in.)
Rashidiyya Foundation

The *Jami' al-tawarikh* (Gatherer of chronicles) is a remarkable treatise that attempts to set the Mongol rulers of Iran within a broader Islamic framework. Its author, Rashiduddin, was born in 1247 in Hamadan in western Iran. Although originally trained as a physician, Rashiduddin rose through the administrative ranks of the Il-Khanids until he became one of the leading ministers of Ghazan Khan (r. 1295–1304). Begun under Ghazan Khan's patronage, the *Jami' al-tawarikh* was not completed until the reign of Uljaytu (r. 1304–16). Initially it was to be a continuation of a more circumscribed history of the Mongols by the earlier Iranian historian Juwayni, but it was extended to include the histories of Europe, India, and China from the time of Adam. Numerous copies of Rashiduddin's world history were prepared at the scriptorium he established in a suburb of Tabriz, but only two illustrated portions of the manuscript produced during the author's lifetime appear to have survived: one dated 1306 in the Edinburgh University Library; the other dated 1314 owned by the Rashidiyya Foundation. The latter contains only sections from the histories of Muhammad, China, India, and the Jews.¹⁴ Both "The Mountains of India" (f. 212) and "Sakyamuni Offers Fruit to the Devil" (f. 342) are from the section on India.¹⁵

14. B. W. Robinson in *Treasures of Islam*, ed. Toby Falk (London: Sotheby's/Philip Wilson Publishers, 1985), p. 49.

15. Basil Gray, *The World History of Rashid al-Din* (London: Faber & Faber, 1978), pp. 10–11, 11–14.

cat. no. 13 *Diwan of Khwaju Kirmani*
Copied by Mir Ali ibn Ilyas al-Tabrizi for Sultan Ahmad
Baghdad, dated A.H. Jumada I 798
(A.D. March 1396)
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
32 x 24 cm (12 3/4 x 9 1/2 in.)
London, The British Library, Add.18113

Although this copy of Khwaju Kirmani's *Diwan* (Collected works) contains only three of the celebrated poet's five poems—*Humay u Humayun* (Humay and Humayun), *Kamalnama* (Book of Kamal), and *Rauzat al-Anwar* (Garden of lights)—it is among the most luxurious manuscripts produced during the fourteenth century.

Written in an elegant nasta'liq on a rich cream-colored paper, the manuscript contains nine superbly executed paintings that represent a dramatic departure from simple and more conservative earlier works. The brilliant colors, intricate compositions, and elegant figures of these paintings established standards of quality that quickly became associated throughout the eastern Islamic world with royal patronage. Junayd, whose name appears in the architectural decoration of "Humay Leaves Humayun's Room on the Day of Their Wedding" (f. 45b), was, according to tradition, a pupil of the renowned fourteenth-century artist Shamsuddin.¹⁶

16. "Doṣṭ Muhammad's Introduction to the Bahram Mirza Album," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.

- cat. no. 14 *Poetic Anthology*
Copied by Mansur Bihbihani
Iran, dated A.H. Muharram 801
(A.D. September 1398)
642 folios with 12 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
30.6 x 20 cm (12 x 7 7/8 in.)
Istanbul, Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, 1950

The poems contained in this *Anthology* are from the works of Nizami, Amir Khusrav Dihlavi, Khwaja Imad, Kamal Isma'il, Sa'di, and Amid al-Mulk. Eleven of the manuscript's paintings (ff. 26a, 85b-86a, 128a-129a, 180b-181a, 250b-251a) accompany Nizami's celebrated *Khamsa* (Quintet) and consist of highly abstracted and idealized landscapes. The twelfth painting (f. 287b), which depicts a royal hunt, illustrates one of Amir Khusrav Dihlavi's poems. It has been argued that the landscapes, which do not appear to relate to Nizami's poems, are derived from Zoroastrian sources and may even have been executed by a Zoroastrian.¹⁷ Although it is impossible to corroborate this, the densely patterned scenes with their pulsating rhythms and sinuous vines have few parallels in fourteenth- or fifteenth-century Persian painting. Only the paintings from an anthology allegedly dated 1417¹⁸ and the wall paintings from several late fourteenth-early fifteenth-century Timurid tombs in Samarqand appear to share similar features.¹⁹

17. Mehmet Aga-Oglu, "The Landscape Miniatures of an Anthology Manuscript of the Year 1398 A.D.," *Art Islamica* 5 (1936): 87-98.

18. Glenn D. Lowry and Milo C. Beach, *An Annotated and Illustrated Checklist of the Vase Collection* (Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 1988), p. 38.

19. Gökembek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 2: pl. 34.

- cat. no. 15 *Diwan of Sultan Ahmad*
Baghdad, dated A.H. Ramadan 809 (A.D. June 1406)
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
27.5 x 17.5 cm (10 7/8 x 6 7/8 in.)
Istanbul, Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, 1046

Although constantly under attack by the Timurids and the Qaraqoyunlu, Sultan Ahmad ibn Uways (r. 1382-1410) commissioned several lavishly illustrated and illuminated manuscripts and patronized such renowned artists as Abdul-Hayy, who was taken to Samarqand after his capture by Timur. According to the Timurid

historian Dawlatshah, Sultan Ahmad "composed good poetry in Arabic and Persian and was proficient in many crafts, such as painting, illumination, bow making, arrow making, and inlay."²⁰ The extraordinary double-page illuminations (ff. 1b-2a, 55b-56a, 118b-119a, 197b-198a) and *debachas* (ff. 1a, 55a, 118a, 197a) are remarkable for their inventive compositions, brilliant pigments, and technical refinement. Like patterns in a kaleidoscope, these designs provide a visual counterpoint to the ruler's evocative poetry. At least one other copy of the sultan's *Diwan*, containing eight folios with marginal drawings, is extant (Freer Gallery of Art, 32.30-37).²¹

20. "Mir Dawlatshah Samarqandi's *Tadhkirat al-shu'ara*," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.

21. Esm Atil, *The Breath of the Masters* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1978), pp. 14-27.

- cat. no. 16A-B *Collection of Epics*
Copied in 2 volumes by Muhammad Sa'id Hafiz al-Qari
Shiraz(?), dated A.H. 800 (A.D. 1397-98)
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
25.8 x 16.8 cm (10 1/8 x 6 5/8 in.)
A Volume 1
129 folios with 5 paintings
Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library, Ms.114
B Volume 2
243 folios with 11 paintings
London, The British Library, Or.2780

Bound in two volumes, this manuscript consists of five epic poems. The first volume contains the *Shahname* (Book of kings) of Firdawsi and five illustrations, the second consists of the *Garshaspname* (Book of Garshasp) of Asadi (f. 1-40), the *Shahanshahname* (Book of the king of kings) of Ahmad Tabrizi (ff. 41-132), the anonymous *Bahmannama* (Book of Bahman, ff. 134-187), and the *Kushname* (Book of Kush; ff. 188-243) and has eleven illustrations.²²

22. A complete list of paintings in volume 1 is given in A. J. Arberry et al., *The Chester Beatty Library: A Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts and Miniatures*, vol. 1 (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co., 1959), pp. 31-32. For the paintings in volume 2, see Norah Titley, *Miniatures from Persian Manuscripts* (London: British Library, 1977), pp. 19-40.

- cat. no. 17 *A Princely Couple*
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1400
Opaque watercolor and gold on paper
48.9 x 31.8 cm (19 1/4 x 12 1/2 in.)
New York, Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, bequest of Cora Timken Burnett, 1957.
57.51.20

Tall and graceful, this princely couple evokes late fourteenth-century Jalayirid paintings. Drawings and paintings of similar figures, also very large and closely related to Jalayirid models, are contained in albums in the Topkapı Sarayı Museum (e.g., H.2152) and in the Diez album (e.g., ff. 72-73). While it is tempting to associate these boldly conceived images with the patronage of

Timur, it is equally possible that they were commissioned by a contemporary member of the dynasty.

The Detroit Institute of Arts, City of Detroit purchase, 30.323

cat. no. 18 *Duʿan of Amir Khusrāw Dihlavi*
Copied for Ibrahim-Sultan ibn Shahrūkh
Shiraz, dated A.H. 834 (A.D. 1430–31)
375 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
26 x 17.7 cm (10 1/4 x 7 in.)
Istanbul, Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, 1982

One of the ironies of book production in Shiraz under Ibrahim-Sultan is the frequent qualitative disparity between illumination and manuscript illustration. The decorative program of this unillustrated manuscript is of the highest quality and includes both a double-page frontispiece and a stunning debacha on the opening folio. The latter, a radiant, hovering orbit of whirling palmettes, knots, and arabesques, cradles an inscription—"the Slave of the Court, Ibrahim Shah"—which likely refers to Shahrūkh's loyal son Ibrahim, the governor of Shiraz. The parallels with contemporary Herat illumination, particularly a dazzling series of chapter headings and debachas done for Shahrūkh's *Kulīyyat-i tarikhī* (cat. no. 46), are unmistakable.

cat. no. 19 *Section of a Koran*
Iran, c. 1400–1450
46 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
51.5 x 39 cm (21 x 15 1/2 in.)
Istanbul, Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, 564

This majestic, richly decorated juz' of a Koran demonstrates the lyrical precision and imagination Timurid patronage brought to Islam's holiest book. Although its illumination has been damaged, the page's original effect remains intact, the result of the superb balance, harmonious spacing, and flawless execution Timurid calligraphers brought to the text, here written in gold *muhaqqaq* script and meticulously outlined in black ink. Monumental cursive scripts in the eastern Islamic area became prevalent after the rise of the Mamluks in Egypt and the Mongol Il-Khanids in Iran and Iraq. The impact of Timurid aesthetic ideals together with a consuming interest in calligraphy on the part of several princes produced a taste among the dynasty for Koranic scripts that combined power of form with elegance and grandeur. A number of large Korans with similar qualities, some written by Ibrahim-Sultan, are now housed in the Mashhad Shrine Library and the Pars Museum in Shiraz.²¹

21. Martin Lings, *The Quranic Art of Calligraphy and Illumination* (London: World of Islam Festival, 1976), pls. 31–33.

cat. no. 20 *Koran*
Iran, c. 1425–50
142 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
30.5 x 26.7 cm (12 x 10 1/2 in.)

Timurid illumination, while linked with the large-featured forms popular under the Il-Khanids and Mamluks, moved inexorably during the fifteenth century toward ever greater intricacy and finesse. While there were pointed recapitulations of the grandeur and monumentality that characterized fourteenth-century work (see cat. nos. 19, 102), this example characterizes the Timurid kitabkhana's treatment of the Koran as a venerated object. While calligraphers made innovative use of thuluth and its variant scripts, like the *rayham* employed in this example, for the text, emphasis in illumination shifted to include not only the frontispiece but also the opening pages of the text, the sura titles, and the different sections of the text.²² Here one finds nearly the complete Timurid decorative vocabulary, its perfectly cast elements woven into a jeweled screen that embellishes the text and dazzles the eye.

22. David James, *Qur'ans and Bindings from the Chester Beatty Library* (London: World of Islam Festival, 1980), p. 68.

cat. no. 21 *Kalīla u Dimna of Nizāmuddīn Abū'l-Ma'ālī Nasrullāh*
Copied by Shamsuddin Baysunghur for
Baysunghur ibn Shahrūkh
Herat, dated A.H. Muharram 833 (A.D. October
1429)
146 folios with 25 paintings
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
28.7 x 19.7 cm (11 1/4 x 7 1/2 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, R.1022

Kalīla u Dimna (Kalila and Dimna), a book of animal stories named after the two jackals who are its main characters, was one of the most popular examples of the Mirror for Princes genre. Translated into Arabic in the mid-eighth century, the work was originally an ancient collection of Indian fables specifically addressed to kings and illustrated to convey their morals more effectively. The Persian translation by Abū'l-Ma'ālī Nasrullāh was made during the mid-twelfth century and highly praised as a model of eloquence by Wassaf, the historian and panegyrist of the Il-Khanids. It was, in fact, frequently illustrated during their rule and even translated into Mongolian.²³ This most spectacular of Timurid versions is one of two made for Baysunghur; the other, a 1431 version (Topkapı Sarayı Library, H.362), actually features earlier, more modest paintings pasted onto newly copied and illuminated pages.²⁴

23. Edward C. Berne, *A Literary History of Persia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923), 2: 148, 3: 930–34.

24. B. W. Robinson, "Prince Baysunghur and the Fables of Bidpai," *Oriental Art*, n.s. 16 (1970): 145–54.

cat. no. 22 *Koran*
Copied in 2 volumes by Ibrahim-Sultan ibn
Shahrūkh
Shiraz, dated A.H. 4 Ramadan 830 (A.D. 29 June
1427)
267 folios (vol. 1)

Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
27.9 x 31.1 cm (11 x 4 1/8 in.)
New York, Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of
Art, gift of Alexander Smith Cochran, 1913,
13.228.1 (vol. 1)

Ibrahim-Sultan was described by Dawlatshah as "a virtuous and talented administrator and religiously observant."²⁷ The majority of the known writings in his hand, like those of his brother Bay-sunghur, are ethical or religious in nature (see Appendix II), such as this Koran. Here the sturdy naskh copied by the prince has been embellished by illumination added in the sixteenth century, although much of the floral decoration gracing the margins of many pages is reminiscent of early Timurid examples (cat. no. 38). The manuscript also includes a memorandum written in 1638 by one of his descendants, the future Mughal emperor Awrangzeb.

27. "Dawlatshah," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.

cat. no. 23 *Tile from the Ghryathriyya Madrasa*
Khargird, c. 1444
Cuerda seca glazed ceramic tile
Diameter: 38.1 cm (15 in.)
New York, Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of
Art, gift of Phillip M. Lydig, 1917, 17.143.1

Pir-Ahmad Khwafi, Shahrukh's most important vizier for thirty years (1417–47), built his madrasa, not at the capital of Herat, but in the small village of Khargird, near his native town of Khwaf. While the motives for its construction and location have been viewed as essentially economic, the act in itself was ostensibly a pious one. Tile revetment completely covered the structure, further emphasizing with luminous colors its remarkable symmetry and precision of plan. *Banna's* technique in turquoise and cobalt blue dominated the decoration, although other, more subtle techniques like *cuerda seca* were also employed. This spectacular star tile was originally placed in combination with others on the west *mihrab*.²⁸

28. Bernard O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers in assoc. with Umdena Publications, 1987), pp. 211–15.

cat. no. 24 *Stone Inlay from the Madrasa of Ulugh-Beg ibn Shahrukh*
Samarqand, c. 1417–20
Marble
Diameter: 28.5 cm (11 1/4 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatliche Museen Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Museum für Islamische Kunst, I.4534

Highly prized as a building material because of its durability and scarcity, stone, especially marble, was primarily used by the Timurids for decoration. Timur, however, made extensive use of it for structural purposes at the Bibi Khanim mosque in Samarqand. There he reportedly employed two hundred masons from Fars, Azerbaijan, India, and other countries to fashion the more than four hundred stone columns, of which only some bases remain. Its presence at Samarqand's most important structure undoubtedly served as an impetus for the use of stone at Ulugh-Beg's madrasa.

It was particularly effective there in combination with tile for the decoration of dadoes, portals, and the bases of piers.

cat. no. 25 *Mi'rajnama*
Copied in Arabic and Turki by Hari-Malik Bakhshi
Herat(?), c. 1425–50
84 folios with 61 paintings
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
34.3 x 25.4 cm (13 1/2 x 10 in.)
Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Suppl. Turc 190

Antoine Galland (1646–1715), the French orientalist famous for translating the *Thousand and One Nights*, acquired this celebrated work in Istanbul on January 14, 1673. In the absence of a colophon the date and place of production are uncertain, but the *Mi'rajnama* (Book of the ascent) is bound together with a *Tadhkira-i awliya* (Nonces of saints) written by the same scribe in 1436. While distinguished by its unusual iconography and Uighur script, the text is equally fascinating. It describes the miraculous nighttime ascension of the Prophet Muhammad from Jerusalem on the fabulous human-headed beast, Buraq. The visions of Heaven and Hell confronted on his journey through the seven celestial spheres to the throne of God include encounters with Old Testament prophets, hours, and demons who punish the wicked in Hell. Based on biographical traditions collected by Ibn Hisham, the *Mi'rajnama* is known in both eastern and western Islamic versions, the latter profoundly influencing Dante's *Divine Comedy*.²⁹

29. E. Cerulli, *Il "Libro della Scala" e la questione delle fonti arabo-spagnole della Divina Commedia* (Varese, 1949).

cat. no. 26 *Poetic Anthology*
Copied in Persian and Turki by Baqir Mansur
Bakhshi for Amir Jalaluddin Firozshah
Yazd, dated A.H. 835 (A.D. 1431)
182 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
19.4 x 12.8 cm (6 1/2 x 4 1/2 in.)
London, The British Library, Or.8193

As supreme commander of Timurid military forces under Shahrukh, it is not surprising that Amir Jalaluddin Firozshah's cultural interests would reflect a Turkic bias. His *Poetic Anthology*, which includes works by Kamaluddin Khujandi, Amiri, and the manuscript's scribe, the poet Mansur Bakhshi, is distinguished by the latter's use of Uighur script. Attention, however, is focused on the decoration consisting of numerous stenciled drawings and designs in a variety of colors edged in gold that dominate its pages. Included are flowering plants in vases, trees, floral scrolls, birds, animals, geometric designs, and arabesques. There is also an intriguing arabesque bearing human heads as well as those of mythical creatures, a traditional Islamic motif known as *waq-waq*, which became increasingly popular in decorative drawing and design during the fifteenth century.

cat. no. 27 *The Appearance of Buddha Sakyamuni to the People after His Death*

From a dispersed *Majma' al-tawarikh* of Hafiz-i Abru
Herat, c. 1425
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
33 x 22.2 cm (13 x 8 7/8 in.)
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Nasli M. Heeramanek Collection, gift of Joan Palevsky, M.73.5.412

Until the conversion of the Il-Khanid Ghazan Khan to Islam in 1295, a number of Mongol rulers in Iran professed Buddhism, maintaining monks and scholars from China, Central Asia, and Kashmir at their courts.³⁰ While representations of Buddhism are extremely rare in Islamic art, the Timurid's Central Asian heritage explains a continuing interest on the part of the dynasty in the cultural traditions of their homelands. Incorporated into Hafiz-i Abru's text are sections of Rashiduddin's earlier *Jami' al-tawarikh* that concern Buddhist subjects. Along with the textual modifications inevitable in a Muslim retelling of the death of Sakyamuni, this folio, which bears on its reverse the seal of Shahrukh, also incorporates visual changes, such as the placement of the body in a contemporary domed tomb following Islamic tradition.

30. Basil Gray, *The World History of Rashid al-Din* (London: Faber & Faber, 1977), p. 14.

cat. no. 28 *The Last of the Abbasid Caliphs, Musta'im*

From a dispersed *Majma' al-tawarikh* of Hafiz-i Abru
Herat, c. 1425
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
36 x 25 cm. (14 1/4 x 9 7/8 in.)
Geneva, Collection Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, IR.M.57(a)

This page typifies the Timurid manipulation of history. Its text deals with the defeat and death of Musta'im, the last Abbasid caliph, who perished in the destruction of Baghdad under the Mongol ruler Hulagu in 1258. From a Sunni Muslim perspective, the fall of the caliphate was a catastrophe of the highest order, and Hulagu was warned by advisers that the caliph's death would bring ruin and natural disasters. For the Mongols, however, the conquest of one of the fabled cities of the world would be remembered as a glorious military victory and a justification of their power and right to rule. Following seven days of killing, looting, and burning in the city, Musta'im was executed in the manner reserved for Mongol princes: so that no blood would be spilled, he was rolled up in a carpet and kicked or beaten to death.³¹ Nearly two hundred years later, this Timurid visualization of Turco-Mongol history has repositioned the event in an Islamic context. Musta'im is represented in the guise of a flaming martyr, encased in a chinoiserie structure flanked by writhing blossoms, a necessary victim of a Mongol military power that was perceived as an instrument of the will of God.

31. J. A. Boyle, "Dynastic and Political History of the Il-Khans," in *The Cambridge History of Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 5: 146-49.

cat. no. 29 *Zafarnama of Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi*

Copied by Ya'qub ibn Hasan, known as Siraj al-Husayni al-Sultani, for Ibrahim-Sultan ibn Shahrukh
Shiraz, dated A.H. Dhu'l-Hijja 839
(A.D. June-July 1436)
393 folios with 8 remaining illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
35.6 x 24.8 cm (14 x 9 3/4 in.)
England, private collection

A talented poet and polymath, Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi (d. 1454) served the Timurid house in a number of capacities. After the death of his primary patron, Ibrahim-Sultan, in 1433, for example, he was in attendance to Sultan-Muhammad ibn Baysunghur and later worked at Ulugh-Beg's observatory in Samarqand. In addition, he maintained close ties with two mystical brotherhoods: the Naqshbandi and the Ni'matullahi. His greatest contribution to the dynasty, however, was the *Zafarnama* written for Ibrahim-Sultan in 1424-25, an elaborate, derivative reworking, in essence, of the earlier *Zafarnama* (1404) of Nizamuddin Shami. Extant portions of Yazdi's text reveal two distinct components: an introduction known as the *Tarikh-i Jahangir* (History of the world conqueror) and the *Zafarnama* proper. The first discusses the origins of the Turks and Mongols; the careers of Chingiz Khan, his sons, and successors; and events in the Chaghatayid Khanate. The second covers Timur's life. Also included are valuable accounts of regional dynasties, such as the Karti, Muzaffarids, and Qaraqoyunlu, as well as Timurid campaigns in Mughulistan and the exploits of Shahrukh.³² It has been estimated that this particular manuscript originally contained as many as twenty-eight miniatures (twenty in the form of double-page paintings) and 355 folios. In March 1480 it was repaired at Herat and rebound with an introduction, bringing the number of folios to approximately 427.³³

32. John E. Woods, "The Rise of Timurid Historiography," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 46, no. 2 (April 1987): 99-124.

33. Eleanor Sims, personal correspondence, 29 August 1984.

cat. no. 30 *Timur Celebrates His Conquest of Delhi in December 1398*

From a partially dispersed *Zafarnama* of Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi copied by Ya'qub ibn Hasan, known as Siraj al-Husayni al-Sultani, for Ibrahim-Sultan ibn Shahrukh
Shiraz, dated A.H. Dhu'l-Hijja 839
(A.D. June-July 1436)
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
28.3 x 16.8 cm (11 1/4 x 6 1/2 in.)
Cambridge, Harvard University Art Museums (Arthur M. Sackler Museum), bequest of the estate of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, 1960.198

The Timurid conquest of India began in the spring of 1398, when Timur left Samarqand for the plains of northern India at the head of sixty thousand troops. India's proverbial wealth and its political instability made it an inviting target, although Yazdi dutifully states that Timur's intent was to "exterminate robbers, tyrants and

infidels, to put a stop to their disorders, and to give peace and tranquility to the people." Reaching Delhi after several months of campaigning, the city fell in a single day as the young Tughluq ruler fled the city.¹⁴ This imposing illustration depicts Timur sitting in state during the elaborate victory celebrations staged by the conqueror in late December. Yazdi reported that the *khutba* was read "in the blessed name of His Majesty, the Lord of the Fortunate Conjunction," but that statement reflects the selective editing of events by the author and his patron, Ibrahim-Sultan, in light of the new Islamic perspective forged during Shahrukh's reign. According to Shami's earlier version, the sermon was read in the name of "the Emperor of the epoch and the age," an allusion to Sultan-Mahmud Khan, the Chingizid figurehead in whose name Timur claimed to rule.¹⁵

14. Marianna S. Simpson, *Arab and Persian Painting in the Fogg Art Museum* (Cambridge, Mass.: Fogg Art Museum/Harvard University, 1980), pp. 40–41.

15. Woods, "Timurid Historiography," 104–5.

cat. no. 31 *Armor of Ibrahim-Sultan ibn Shahrukh*
Shiraz, c. 1415–35
Iron damascened in gold
101.6 x 68.6 cm (40 x 27 in.)
Riyadh, Collection Rifaat Sheikh El Ard

This mail and plate armor shirt is one of the rare identifiable pieces of Timurid armor in existence and is without doubt the most important. The shirt is composed of both riveted and whole links, heavier at the chest, and set with ninety-six plates of iron arranged in rows at the front, sides, and back. These plates are damascened in gold with interlocking cartouches that enclose floral arabesques. "Made for the treasury of Ibrahim-Sultan" is engraved in Arabic on the upper right plate at the front. On the basis of its inscription and decoration it seems certain that the armor was made for Ibrahim-Sultan, most likely in a workshop in his capital at Shiraz by an artisan using kitabkhana designs as a model.¹⁶ The damascened floral decoration, for example, is nearly identical to that found in two illuminated headings in Korans (dated A.H. 827 [A.D. 1424] and 834 [1430–31]) copied by the prince.¹⁷ Technically the armor also represents a major advance: not only is it the earliest surviving datable armor of its kind, it is also one of the first produced in what was then a new style developed by armorers working for the Timurids. Mail and plate armor became common during the fourteenth century, replacing the old lamella armor in use in the Near East since the ninth century B.C. A depiction of this armor first appears in the *Diwan* of Khwaju Kirmani (cat. no. 13), executed at Baghdad in 1396, three years after Timur's conquest. Also depicted in the same manuscript is a transitional type, suggesting that the new armor represents a Timurid innovation. With its benefit of added flexibility without the loss of strength and protective qualities, mail and plate armor represented a major advantage for Timurid armies, and all the remaining fifteenth-century armors, including Mamluk, Aqqoyunlu, and Ottoman examples, are of this type.¹⁸

16. A helmet now housed in the Royal Armoury in Turin is also a likely product of this workshop.

17. Linger, *Dynamic Art*, pls. 81–83.

18. This entry is based in its entirety on information provided by David Alexander on personal correspondence: 3 September 1988.

cat. no. 32 *Khamsa of Nizami*

Copied by Yusuf al-Jami for Ismat al-Dunya;
illustrated and illuminated by Khwaja Ali
al-Tabrizi
Herat, dated A.H. 849 (A.D. 1445–46)
325 folios with 11 original and 2 later illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
24.1 x 16 cm (9 1/2 x 6 1/2 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, H.781

Ismat al-Dunya was the wife of Muhammad-Juki ibn Shahrukh. After her husband's death she married Abu'l-Qasim ibn Baysunghur, for whom a superb binding tooled with his name and titles was added to this *Khamsa* of Nizami. Highly unusual for the period is the colophon naming the illustrator and illuminator, one Khwaja Ali of Tabriz, whose hand has been traced in Muhammad-Juki's *Shahname* (cat. no. 43), Shahrukh's *Khamsa* of Nizami (cat. no. 38), and Baysunghur's *Chahar maqala* (Four discourses) in the Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi (1954).¹⁹ Eight of the eleven original paintings are based on earlier Jalayirid or Timurid compositions. Two, added later (ff. 160a and 279b), are strikingly different, featuring figures in Italian dress. Like a small number of fifteenth-century manuscripts, they seem to reflect European influence and were added perhaps during Aqqoyunlu rule in Tabriz, where the presence of Italians was not uncommon.²⁰

19. Ernst Grube and Eleanor Sims, "The School of Herat from 1400 to 1450," in Basil Gray, ed. *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia: 14th–16th Centuries* (Boulder: Shambhala, 1979), p. 162.

20. Filiz Cagman and Zeren Temelci, *The Topkapı Sarayı Museums: The Albums and Illustrated Manuscripts*, trans. and ed. J. M. Rogers (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1986), p. 90, nos. 59–60.

cat. no. 33 *Baysunghur Slays a Wolf*
Herat, c. 1425–34
Ink on paper
6.7 x 14 cm (2 5/8 x 5 1/2 in.)
Cambridge, Harvard University Art Museums
(Arthur M. Sackler Museum), purchase from the
Alpheus Hyatt Fund, 1952.5

Portraiture in the Islamic world has always been a nebulous concept, particularly in illustrated manuscripts. Baysunghur's "portrait" has been identified in a series of paintings executed for his books.²¹ In the formal guise of ruler, hunter, or lover, they all conform to an idealized conception of the prince. More representative of the kitabkhana's talent for structured design than an accurate portrayal, this fine depiction of the prince hunting may well have been a preliminary design for one of his manuscripts. The composition conforms to royal hunting imagery in use from at least the Il-Khanid period, and the albums in Berlin and Istanbul as well as Timurid manuscripts are populated by dozens of compositions of this type that conflate Timurid military and hunting prowess with that of the heroes of Iranian literature.

21. B. W. Robinson, "Prince Baysunghur's *Nizami*: A Speculation," *Art Orientalis* 2 (1957): 381–91.

cat. no. 14 *Humay and Humayun in a Garden*
Possibly from an *Anthology*
Herat, c. 1430
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
29 x 17.3 cm (11 1/2 x 6 7/8 in.)
Paris, Collection Musée des Arts Décoratifs,
Inv. 3727

116 One of the most celebrated of Timurid paintings, this paradisaical vision of a royal garden enclosure embodies the dynasty's own conception of its rule. In precision, finish, and sheer richness of depiction, it recalls "Tahmina Enters Rustam's Chamber" (cat. no. 45). These parallels and the paintings' similar dimensions lead to speculation concerning whether they could have belonged to Baysunghur's famed *jung* (anthology). That now-lost book was considered one of the marvels of Timurid art, and when, according to Dost-Muhammad, Ala'uddawla "stepped up upon the throne of patronage," he ordered its completion by the kitabkhana. In keeping with the Timurid notion of royal book patronage, the *jung* was meant to match in size, format, and paintings an earlier one done for Sultan Ahmad Jalayir.⁴³

43. "Dost-Muhammad," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*

cat. no. 15 *Anthology*
Copied by Muhammad al-Halwa'i and Nasir al-Karib for Iskandar-Sultan ibn Umar-Shaykh Shiraz, dated A.H. 813–14 (A.D. 1410–11)
542 folios with 20 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
18.1 x 12.5 cm (7 1/8 x 4 7/8 in.)
London, The British Library, Add.27261

The broad aims of the Timurid cultural agenda are well illustrated by the frequent commissioning of literary anthologies. This example shares a number of features—double-page illustrations, decorative thumb panels centrally located at the edge of each page, and a wide assortment of marginal drawings—with a larger, contemporary work, originally in two volumes with thirty-four illustrations, also done for Iskandar (Clouste Gulbenkian Foundation, L.A.161).⁴⁴ A virtual miniature encyclopedia of the prince's interests, the London volume is a richly ornamental condensation of evolving Timurid views on the literary and religious traditions of the Islamic Iranian world. Included among its contents are the *Khamasa* of Nizami (ff. 3b–294a), episodes from the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi (ff. 294b–299b) and the *Humay u Humayun* of Khwaju Kirmani (f. 300a), *qasidas* in praise of the Prophet and the imams (ff. 301b–309b), a treatise on religious observances (ff. 348a–364b), and two treatises on astrological matters (ff. 365a–372a and 372b–342b).⁴⁵

44. Basil Gray, *Persian Painting* (Geneva: Skira, 1961), pp. 49–50.

45. *Timurid Miniatures from Persian Manuscripts*, p. 10, no. 101.

cat. no. 16 *Horoscope of Iskandar-Sultan ibn Umar Shaykh*
Compiled and copied by Mahmud ibn Yahya ibn al-Hasan al-Kashi

Shiraz, dated A.H. 22 Dhu'l-Hijja 813 (A.D. 18 April 1411)
86 folios with 1 double-page illustration and 2 full-page drawings
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
26.5 x 16.7 cm (10 1/2 x 6 5/8 in.)
London, Wellcome Institute Library, Ms. Persian 474

Discovered in 1980, this manuscript represents a rare survival of personal horoscopes, probably prepared for all high-ranking members of the Timurid house. The compiler and scribe was likely the grandfather of Ulugh-Beg's famed mathematician, Jamshid Ghiyathuddin al-Kashi. Prepared from observations made at the precise time of Iskandar's birth—Monday, April 25, 1384, at Uzgend (present-day Uzgen in Soviet Kirghizia)—the date is given in a variety of calendrical equivalents, including the Chinese-Ughur calendar. Folio 2a reveals Iskandar's full title: Jalal al-haqq wa'l-dunya wa'l-din Amirzada Iskandar (the splendor of truth [God] and the world and religion, Amirzada Iskandar). Also described at length are the calculations made for the horoscope, including the estimated ascendant at the time of birth, the moment of conception, and the longitude and latitude of the planets. Two folios of poetry discussing the concept of God with a decided Sufi bent conclude the book.⁴⁶

46. Fateme Keshavarz, "The Horoscope of Iskandar Sultan," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, III, 2 (1984): 197–201.

cat. no. 17 *Battle of the Clans*
From an *Anthology* copied by Mahmud al-Husayni Shiraz, dated A.H. 823 (A.D. 1420)
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
28.2 x 20.2 cm (11 1/8 x 8 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Museum für Islamische Kunst, I.4628

Although the dedicatory *shamsa* contains the *ex libris* of Baysunghur, the paintings and illuminations of the manuscript conform with the known patronage of his brother Ibrahim. Given the known correspondence on literary matters between the two brothers, the book is generally considered a gift from Ibrahim. The contents are representative of the works admired by Timurid princes: the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi, *Humay u Humayun* and *Gul u Nawroz* (Rose and new year) of Khwaju Kirmani, *Hasht bihisht* (Eight paradises) and *Iskandarnama* (History of Iskandar) of Amir Khusraw, *Mantiq al-tayr* (Discourse of the birds) of Attar, and selections from the *Khamasa* of Nizami.

cat. no. 18 *Khamasa of Nizami*
Copied by Mahmud for Shahrukh ibn Timur Herat, dated A.H. Rabi' II 835 (A.D. December 1431)
502 folios with 18 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
23.4 x 13.2 cm (9 1/8 x 5 1/8 in.)
Leningrad, Courtesy State Hermitage, VR-1000

The view of Shahrukh solely as a patron of historical painting in a sober, archaizing manner is contradicted by this lively and richly decorated volume of Nizami.⁴⁶ While its large illustrative program lacks the consistent precision and uniform finish of those executed for Baysunghur, the best paintings clearly reveal the influence of poetic painting done for him. An additional similarity in illumination indicates a likely sharing of artists and materials between father and son. The two, in fact, shared more interests than generally recognized. Baysunghur commissioned numerous historical manuscripts and even added an inscription to one of his father's copies of the *Jami' al-tawarikh*.⁴⁷ An interesting feature of the Leningrad *Khamsa*, one that further betrays Shahrukh's carefully contrived public image of devout piety, is the inclusion of an erotic scene on folio 135a.

46. Grube and Sims, "The School of Herat," pp. 152–54.

47. Thomas Woodward Lentz, Jr., "Painting at Herat under Baysunghur ibn Shahrukh," Ph.D. diss. (Harvard University, 1985), pp. 141–14.

- cat. no. 39 *Khamsa of Attar*
Herat, c. 1438
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on colored paper
34 x 25 cm (13 1/4 x 9 7/8 in.)
Istanbul, Türk ve Islam Eserleri Müzesi, 1991

This massive volume of the poetry of Fariduddin Attar ("the Druggist"), which carries a spectacular debacha of Shahrukh naming the book's contents (f. 1a), is likely a companion volume to a similar work now in the Topkapı Sarayı Library (cat. no. 40). The most distinctive aspect of these manuscripts is the superb quality of their paper; unusually heavy and marked by glossy polished surfaces in a variety of bright colors and Chinese-inspired designs, it was a costly but desirable feature for manuscripts during the fifteenth century. Given the similarity in decoration of known examples of this paper, it may be that they are all the product of one manufactory, perhaps in Samarqand, a city long famed for its production of fine paper.⁴⁸

48. Nurah M. Titley, *Persian Miniature Painting and Its Influence on the Art of Turkey and India* (Austin: University of Texas Press in cooperation with the British Library, 1981), pp. 239–40.

- cat. no. 40 *Sitta of Attar*
Copied by Abdul-Malik for Shahrukh ibn Timur
Herat, dated A.H. 27 Shawwal 841 (A.D. 23 April 1438)
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on colored paper
35.9 x 24.3 cm (14 1/4 x 9 5/8 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, A.10.3059

Shahrukh's careful attention to the less orthodox aspects of Islam, a trait inherited from his father, is reflected in the contents of this sumptuous volume of Sufi poetry, the *Sitta* (Sextet), by Attar. The manuscript is remarkable for its use of a highly polished and decorated "Chinese" paper seen in other Timurid manuscripts (cat. no. 39), but of greater aesthetic interest is the cover, one of the masterpieces of Timurid bookbinding among the rich collection in the Topkapı Sarayı Library. Bearing an inscription to Shahrukh on the

outer face of the flap spine, the cover features both block stamping and intricate leather filigree. Rather than pressing and molding with individual stamps or tools, single blocks were engraved and carved, producing elaborate images like the fantastic landscape seen on the exterior of the front cover and flap.⁴⁹ The interior of the front cover displays a stunning array of kitabkhana chinoiserie motifs executed in filigree against a glowing blue ground, including a sinuous pair of dueling *qilin* (mythical Chinese beasts) in a luxuriously refulgent central medallion. The combination of these features in one binding demonstrates the technical capabilities and daring imagination employed by bookbinders in the Herat kitabkhana, talents that remained unsurpassed in the Islamic world.

49. Öltay Adanapa, "The Art of Bookbinding," in Gray, ed. *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia*, p. 60.

- cat. no. 41 *Gulistan of Sa'di*
Copied by Ja'far al-Baysunghuri for Baysunghur ibn Shahrukh
Herat, dated A.H. 830 (A.D. 1426–27)
56 folios with 8 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
24.8 x 15.4 cm (9 7/8 x 6 in.)
Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library, ML119

The Beatty *Gulistan* is the earliest surviving illustrated copy of this famed text, composed in the mid-thirteenth century by the poet Sa'di (d. 1292). Consisting almost entirely of anecdotes, it is essentially a didactic work that focuses on social and ethical issues. Its popularity was undoubtedly due to a combination of pious and worldly sentiments that rendered the contents eminently practical.⁵⁰ In design, materials, and execution this copy marks the first appearance of the extraordinarily high visual standards that came to typify Timurid book production in Herat during the second quarter of the fifteenth century. The fluid precision and luxury of the calligraphy is mirrored in the jewellike fineness of both illumination and painting, which may reflect the influence of Ja'far's exacting standards.

50. Beattie, *Library History*, I, 528–32.

- cat. no. 42 *A Prince Seated in a Garden*
From a lost manuscript
Herat, c. 1425–30
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
21.6 x 13.7 cm (8 1/2 x 5 3/8 in.)
Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, purchase made possible by Smithsonian unrestricted trust fund, Smithsonian Collections Acquisition Program, and Dr. Arthur M. Sackler, SB6.0142/0143

The subject of this double-page frontispiece, a prince seated on a carpet surrounded by attendants and musicians in a flowering meadow, rivaled court enthronements as an image and declaration of majesty during the Timurid period. With the ritualized deployment of court personnel and the replacement of the throne with a carpet, natural space is formalized into the ideal world synonymous

with princely life. Often integral to these images of royal power is wine, usually shown being accepted by the prince from an attendant. Despite the Koranic injunction against its use, a high consumption of wine was hardly unusual among much of Timurid royalty. It seems, in fact, at times to have been an attribute of princely behavior.³¹ While not representative of his mature patronage, it has been suggested that Baysunghur is the prince depicted here.³²

31. Ruy González de Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane, 1405–1406*, trans. Guy Le Strange (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1928), p. 231.

32. Robinson, "Prince Baysunghur's Nizami," pp. 86–87.

cat. no. 43 *Shahnama of Firdawsi*
Iran, c. 1444
491 folios with 35 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
34 x 22 cm (13 1/2 x 8 3/4 in.)
London, The Royal Asiatic Society, Ms. 239

A gift in 1834 to the Royal Asiatic Society from Lieutenant Colonel C. J. Doyle, this superb *Shahnama* had earlier been presented to Lord Hastings in India, where it had long been the proud possession of the Mughal emperors. It ranks among the greatest illustrated versions of the epic. While undated and unsigned, it is attributed to the patronage of Muhammad-Juki on the basis of his name and titles on a banner in one of the paintings (f. 296a). Juki, the governor of Balkh, suffered from poor health in his later years as well as the intrigues of his stepmother, Gawharshad, and the book appears to have been unfinished at his death. Two paintings are evidently additions made under the direction of the Timurids' Mughal descendants in India: "The Battle between Giv and Tal-hand" (f. 430b), a rather unsuccessful but highly animated Mughal attempt at late Timurid Herat painting, and "Yazdagird Hiding in the Mill" (f. 531a, c. 1600–1605), attributed to the Mughal artist Miskin. The manuscript's fantastic vistas and fairy-tale conceptions of the text succeeded as few other Timurid works of art did in enveloping the ruling house in a radiance of romantic splendor.³³

33. A complete analysis of the manuscript is found in B. W. Robinson, "The *Shahnama* of Muhammad Juki," in *The Royal Asiatic Society: Its History and Treasures*, ed. Stuart Simmonds and Simon Pigby (London: E. J. Brill, 1979), pp. 81–102.

cat. no. 44A–B *Two Folios*
From a dispersed *Shahnama* of Firdawsi
Herat(?), c. 1425–50
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
26.3 x 17.5 cm (10 1/2 x 6 7/8 in.)
Lisbon, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, M.66A, M.66B

The soft, modulated coloring and unusual subject matter of these folios has raised considerable speculation over their origins. Figures, including one angel lassoing another (M.66A), appear to betray European influence, perhaps from Italy or Flanders.³⁴ While little documented, there is no reason to doubt some penetration of *farangi* (Frankish or European) influence in Timurid art given the record of European travelers in Iran during the fifteenth century.

The question of participation by European artists, however, should not be given serious consideration, particularly when the details of decoration are compared with a similarly illuminated page in Shahrugh's *Khamse*, executed at Herat in 1436 (cat. no. 38, f. 243b).

34. David Grop, *Journal Islamic Art. Collection of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation* (Lisbon: Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, 1961), pp. 121.

cat. no. 45 *Tahmina Enters Rustam's Chamber*
Possibly from an *Anthology*
Herat(?), c. 1434–40
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
21 x 10.8 cm (8 1/4 x 4 1/4 in.)
Cambridge, Harvard University Art Museums (Arthur M. Sackler Museum), gift of Mrs. Elsie Cabot Forbes and Mrs. Eric Schroeder and purchase from the Annie S. Coburn Fund, 1939.225

There are numerous representations of this episode from the *Shahnama* in Persian painting, but none as seductively charming as this example. On the basis of an inscription over the windows, the painting was long attributed to Iskandar's patronage at Shiraz. The name Ala'uddawla, the son of Baysunghur, however, has recently been deciphered,³⁵ and the painting's superb finish and execution are clearly more in keeping with Herat work from the 1430s onward. This ambitious prince was a major contender for the throne in the late 1440s. According to Dawlatshah, he had control of his father's posts and after Shahrugh's death seized the treasury and squandered its contents on his soldiers and subjects.³⁶ Dost-Muhammad reports that on Baysunghur's death in 1424 Ala'uddawla inherited his father's kitabkhana and completed the renowned *jum* Baysunghur had ordered, to which this painting may once have belonged.³⁷ In this depiction of Rustam's wedding night, Tahmina, the moon-faced daughter of the king of Samangan, is ushered by a slave into Rustam's lushly appointed chamber. In a brilliant, two-dimensional sequence of color, materials, and texture, space and depth are conveyed by vertically stacking objects and surfaces. The richness and detailed accuracy of this depiction endow the painting with additional value as a document of now-vanished Timurid palaces.

35. Robert Skelton, as cited in Simpson, *Arab and Persian Painting*, pp. 36–37. Wherker Thackston, personal correspondence, January 1982.

36. "Dawlatshah," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.

37. "Dost-Muhammad," in *ibid.*

cat. no. 46 *Kulliyat-i tarikh-i Hafiz-i Abru*
Herat, dated A.H. 818–19 (A.D. 1415–16)
938 folios with 20 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
42.1 x 32 cm (16 1/2 x 12 3/4 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, B.282

Approximately one-quarter of this massive anthology of history by Hafiz-i Abru is illustrated. Predominantly horizontal in format, the twenty paintings represent the most lyrical and innovative manifestation of historical illustration under Shahrugh. The majority deal with Old Testament subjects, and several compositions are dis-

tinguished by a daring use of empty space, which along with the high quality of the pigmentation, creates an unusually resonant visual clarity. Contributing to the overall sumptuousness of this work is a brilliant, infinitely inventive sequence of illuminations in the form of large debachas and *'unwans*. The attention lavished on the creation of these decorative devices by the *kitabkhana* underlines their role in Timurid book production and suggests an importance equal to illustration.

- cat. no. 47 *Penbox*
Shiraz(?), c. 1400–1425
Brass inlaid with gold and silver
5 x 29.8 cm (2 x 11 7/8 in.)
Paris, Musée Jacquemart-André, 1959 (D980)

Decorated with an intricate series of roundels enclosing blossoms, knots, ducks, floral scrolls, and bands of inscriptions in Arabic familiar from fourteenth-century Iranian and Syrian metalwork, this penbox (*qalamdan*) is a masterful combination of technical excellence and artistic invention.¹⁸ Along with a group of related boxes, it forms a dramatic contrast to the bold, massive examples of Central Asian metalwork that can be connected with Timur in the late fourteenth century. A number of decorative elements found in the Jacquemart-André box appear in illumination done for Iskandar at Shiraz (fig. no. 45). The similarity in treatment—the analogy between the illuminated panel and inlaid metalwork is striking—suggests that Timurid patronage at Shiraz was responsible for this work.¹⁹

18 A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, *La Bronze shaman* (Paris: Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1971), pp. 84–85.

19 Glenn D. Lowry, "Iskandar Mirza and Early Timurid Metalwork," *Orientalism* 17, no. 2 (August 1986): 12–21.

- cat. no. 48 *Penbox*
Shiraz(?), c. 1400–1425
Brass inlaid with gold and silver
6.4 x 27.9 cm (2 1/2 x 11 in.)
New York, Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917, 17.190.822

Like the Jacquemart-André box (cat. no. 47), the extreme delicacy of decoration on this piece reflects the shift in aesthetic values that marked Timurid patronage in all the arts. Although the penbox is decorated with elements found in earlier metalwork, there is no precedent for the extraordinarily delicate treatment of the surfaces that virtually banishes any sense of textural contrasts. In its place is found a dense, richly uniform decoration that, like illumination, is "painted" onto the surface, yielding an effect very much in keeping with the emerging Timurid aesthetic.

- cat. no. 49 *Carved Wooden Box of Ulugh-Beg ibn Shahrukh*

Central Asia, c. 1420–49
Sandalwood inlaid with polychrome marquetry,
gold fittings, and silk lining
19.5 x 17 x 31.2 cm (7 1/4 x 6 1/4 x 12 1/4 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Treasury, 2/1846

This superbly carved sandalwood box is one of the most important of surviving Timurid objects, ranking among the finest examples of woodcarving in existence. Historical sources and extant works, like the Gur-i Amir doors (fig. 15) in the Hermitage, provide ample evidence of skilled woodcarvers in residence at Samarkand, yet this object stands alone for the unrivaled richness of its decoration. Constructed of separately carved panels, each is completely covered in a fine floral and vegetal arabesque that reveals cartouches and medallions, two on the lid bearing inscriptions with the name and titles of Ulugh-Beg. In the center of the lid a lobed medallion contains a coiled, four-clawed dragon isolated against a blank background and distinguished by particularly fluid carving. Despite the overall density, the carved decoration creates a surprisingly subtle effect of dematerialization, its floating form woven together from blossoming plants. A remarkable additional feature is the inlaid polychrome marquetry that ornaments the rim of the lid, a rare instance of a technique also seen on the Gur-i Amir doors. Gold clasps and handles complete the external ornamentation, while the interior, which features a small shelf, is entirely covered in red-and-silver-patterned silk. Apart from its spectacular aesthetic qualities, Ulugh-Beg's box also serves as a sad reminder of the nearly total loss of decorative objects made for the royal house.

- cat. no. 50 *Casket*
Made for Ala'uddawla ibn Baysunghur
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1450
Jade (nephrite)
3.5 x 3.2 cm (1 1/4 x 1 1/4 in.)
San Francisco, Asian Art Museum, the Avery
Brundage Collection, B60 J619

Perhaps as highly prized by the Timurids as it was by the Chinese, white jade is rare among Timurid hardstone carving. This small casket (*durī*) is one of two known Timurid vessels executed in the substance. Like the much larger white jade jug made for Ulugh-Beg (fig. no. 46), its surprisingly heavy walls are superbly carved, the mass inscription animated by a lively array of stars, palmettes, and stylized letter shafts. The bottom is graced with a gently revolving floral motif. Such weight and precision of carving for so small a piece lend an unmistakable sense of preciousness. The main inscription reads, "The sultan son of the sultan, Ala'uddawla Bahadur Khan (may [God] perpetuate his kingdom) ordered the completion of this casket." In 1621, when the *durī* came into the possession of the Mughal emperor Jahangir, one of Ala'uddawla's descendants in India, a verse inscription was added: "This life-prolonging jade casket belongs to Jahangir Shah, son of Akbar Shah. For as long as the angels' casket [the celestial sphere] revolves, may the world remember Jahangir Shah."²⁰

20. Trans. Wheeler Thackston.

- cat. no. 52 *Quillon Block*
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1400–1450
Jade (nephrite)
5.1 x 10.2 cm (2 x 4 in.)
New York, Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of Heber R. Bishop, 1902, 02.18.765

A relatively plentiful supply of jade was assured by Timurid proximity to and intermittent control of sources near Khotan. While best known as a valued material for an assortment of Timurid drinking and pouring vessels, jade (for Turks the “victory stone”) was particularly coveted as a decorative element for military paraphernalia. The small size of this quillon block, which normally constitutes the cross-guard of a sword, suggests its use on a dagger, perhaps in combination with a jade handle of the type popular with Timurid descendants in India.

- cat. no. 53 *Dragon-Handled Cup*
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1400–1450
Jade (nephrite)
6.5 x 15.5 x 12.3 cm (2 1/2 x 6 1/8 x 4 7/8 in.)
London, The Trustees of the British Museum, 1961.2–13.1

This cup, whose dark, rich color and polished surfaces evoke a tactile response, is distinguished by its oval shape, lobed foot, and dragon-headed handle. The handle has been traced to Mongol cups with loop handles for attachment to belt or saddle. Examples survive in gold and silver, but Mongol cups in jade were no doubt made as well. A similar, but more elaborately decorated jade cup in India inscribed “Ulugh-Beg Kūrāgānī” also carries the name of the Mughal emperor Jahangir, added in 1611, and its recarved handle likely once carried a dragon head.⁶¹

61. Ernst Gruhe, “Notes on the Decorative Arts of the Timurid Period,” in *Gururajamanjari: Studi in Onore di Giuseppe Tucci* (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1974), 2: 254–55, figs. 130–12.

- cat. no. 54 *Durrat al-taj li-ghurraṭ ad-dibaj of Qutbuddin Mahmud ibn Masʿūd al-Shirazi*
Copied for Iskandar-Sultan ibn Umar-Shaykh Shiraz, c. 1410
211 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
19.8 x 23.7 cm (7 7/8 x 9 1/2 in.)
Private collection

Like most of the manuscripts that have survived from the library of Iskandar-Sultan, this encyclopedia of philosophical science (The pearl of the crown for the finest brocade) is distinguished by its small size and varied contents. Yet another reflection of the prince’s far-ranging intellect, it contains sections on the “rational sciences” (*maʿqūla*), logic, philosophy, physics, geometry, and astronomy. The text is further distinguished by numerous geometric and astronomical diagrams in gold ink.

- cat. no. 54 *Globe*
Made by Muhammad ibn Jaʿfar ibn Umar al-Asturlabi, known as Hilal
Iran, dated A.H. 834 (A.D. 1430–31)
Brass engraved and inlaid with silver
Diameter: 10.5 cm (4 1/8 in.)
London, The Trustees of the British Museum, 96.3.23

This small globe indicates approximately sixty stars by inlaid silver points. Zodiacal names are engraved along the ecliptic, while stars and constellations are identified in kufic script. Near the south pole an inscription states that the placement of the stars was determined by calculations made in A.H. 834 in accordance with the *Suwar al-kawakib al-thabitah* (Book of fixed stars) of al-Sufi, of which an illustrated copy survives from Ulugh-Beg’s library (cat. no. 56). In addition to the Hijri date, the year is also noted according to the Yazdijird (805) and Alexandrian (1713) calendars. Both the stand and ring appear to be contemporary with the globe.⁶²

62. Emile Savage-Smith, *Islamicate Celestial Globes: Their History, Construction and Use*, *Smithsonian Studies in History and Technology*, no. 46 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985), p. 248, no. 62.

- cat. no. 55 *Zij-i Gurkānī*
Copied for Ulugh-Beg ibn Shahrukh Samarqand(?), c. 1435
105 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
26 x 17.5 cm (10 1/4 x 6 7/8 in.)
A. Soudavar Collection

Also known as the *Zij-i Jadid-i Sultanī* and *Zij-i Ulugh-Beg*, the *Zij-i Gurkānī* (Kuraganid ephemeris) was produced by a group of scholars at Samarqand, including Ulugh-Beg himself. Perhaps the most widely used of all tables and surviving in hundreds of copies, this version belonged to the prince, who is described in the ex libris as the “renewer of the sciences of the ancients.” Consisting primarily of numerical tables to measure time and compute celestial movements, it was derived in large part from observations made at the prince’s observatory, completed in 1428/29.⁶³ Notations in this copy indicate it later found its way to Istanbul; it may have been carried there by one of the many Anatolian scholars who studied in Timurid Samarqand and at Ulugh-Beg’s observatory (see chapter v).

63. E. S. Kennedy, “A Survey of Islamic Astronomical Tables,” in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, n.s. 46, pt. 2 (1956): 125–26, 166–67.

- cat. no. 56 *Suwar al-kawakib al-thabitah of al-Sufi*
Copied for Ulugh-Beg ibn Shahrukh Samarqand(?), c. 1430–40
247 folios with 74 colored drawings
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
23.5 x 16.5 cm (9 1/4 x 6 1/2 in.)
Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Arabe 5036

The *Suwar al-kawakib al-thabitah* was originally composed by Abdu’l-Rahman al-Sufi for the Buyid sultan of Iran, Azudduddawla,

in about 960. Ultimately based on Ptolemy's classical work, the *Almagest*, early Muslim versions, such as the Bodleian Library version dated 1009, reflect the iconographical reinterpretations effected by Muslim artists.⁶⁴ Chinese influence in the *kitabkhana* made Ulugh-Beg's copy of this standard astronomical text a particularly rich and imaginative sequence of images. Abdul-Razzaq Samarqandi's description of the interior of the prince's observatory (p. 131) suggest that its walls also may have included depictions of this type, their soft, floating forms tinted with gentle washes of color.

64. Richard Estinghausen, *Amir Ruzbihan* (Geneva: Skira, 1962), pp. 10–11.

cat. no. 57 *Jug*

Signed by Husaynuddin Shihabuddin al-Birjandi Herat(?), dated A.H. 871 (A.D. 1467)
Brass inlaid with silver and gold
16.5 x 13.3 cm (6 1/2 x 5 1/4 in.)
Istanbul, Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, 1961

The floral and vegetal decoration covering the body of this jug features inlays that outline a system of interlocking and overlapping cartouches of a kind found in contemporary Herat manuscript illumination. An unusual feature is the curved spout placed opposite the dragon handle. The jug belongs to a group of signed and dated metal objects characterized by increasingly refined, repetitive decorative programs with inscriptions that seem to have been produced in Khurasan. The *nisba*, al-Birjandi, mentioned in one of the inscriptions refers to the provincial town of Birjand in Quhistan, a mountainous region of Khurasan.⁶⁵

65. Komaroff, "The Timurid Phase," pp. 422–24.

cat. no. 58 *Shahnama of Firdaws*

Copied for Ibrahim-Sultan ibn Shahrukh Shiraz, c. 1435
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
7.7 x 5.7 cm (3 1/4 x 2 1/4 in.)
Oxford, Curators of the Bodleian Library, Ms. Ouseley Add.176

Its forty-seven illustrations (four of them double-page compositions), five gold-tinted drawings, and numerous splendid illuminations make this a sumptuous version of the *Shahnama*. An illuminated dedication (f. 12a) bearing the name of Ibrahim-Sultan links this copy with the prince, and it has been suggested that he commissioned the book soon after 1430 as a response to Baysunghur's Herat copy of that date (fig. 42). Ibrahim's manuscript, in fact, contains the Baysunghuri preface that first appeared then.⁶⁶ Concise in its design and boldly monumental in composition, the illustrative qualities represented by this copy would be admired and practiced at Shiraz to mid-century.

The episode illustrated here, "Rustam Encounters the Div King of Mazanderan," comes near the end of the disastrous campaign undertaken by the Iranian king Kay Kaus into Mazanderan, traditionally a land notorious for its evil *divs* (demons). After rescuing Kay Kaus and slaying the White Div (cat. no. 16A), the Iranian hero Rustam captured the Div King himself, who attempted to foil his

captor by turning himself into stone. With heroic strength Rustam carried the stone before Kay Kaus, who ordered the Div King's execution when he reappeared in human form.

66. B. W. Robinson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Persian Paintings in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 16.

cat. no. 59 *Poetic Anthology*

Yazd, dated A.H. 810 (A.D. 1407)
289 folios with 14 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
26 x 18 cm (10 1/4 x 7 1/4 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, H.796

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The profound impact of the Jalayirid tradition at Tabriz on Timurid painting is epitomized by this manuscript executed at the city of Yazd. Along with the 1397–98 *Epics* (cat. no. 16A–B) and the 1398 *Poetic Anthology* (cat. no. 14) it not only signals a change in painting associated with the province of Fars but also documents the movement of Jalayirid artists to Timurid ateliers. An immediate impact was felt in the Timurid attitude toward materials. Advances in paper and pigments are obvious when compared with earlier painting in Fars, while the binding is notable for its rich stamped and filigree decoration. The stamping represents the earliest surviving embossed cover with animal decoration; the filigree, along with the 1406 *Diwan* of Sultan Ahmad (cat. no. 15), is the earliest known filigree binding. The illustrations reflect changes as well, for while much of the drawing can be characterized as somewhat tentative, there is no mistaking the seductive, transforming effect of a luminous new palette. In addition, there are numerous links with the manuscripts later produced for Iskandar at Shiraz, particularly in terms of the page format. It has been suggested that this manuscript may also have been executed for Iskandar, who was governor of Yazd in 1405–6 and was apparently still in control there in 1407 on behalf of his brother Pir-Muhammad.⁶⁷

67. I. Seichoukine, "La Peinture à Yazd au début du xv siècle," *Syria* 41 (1968): 99–104; Basil Gray, "The School of Shiraz from 1392 to 1453," in Gray, ed., *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia: 14th–16th Centuries*, p. 136.

cat. no. 60 *Roundels*

Shiraz, c. 1410–20
Ink and gold on paper
15 x 13 cm (5 7/8 x 5 1/4 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album f. 73.S.47, #5

Fourteenth-century paintings and drawings are found in considerable numbers alongside Timurid materials in the Diez album. Artists turned to such repositories for themes, subjects, and styles as demonstrated by this early fifteenth-century page with its allusions to earlier Il-Khanid painting. There are, in fact, several pages in the Diez album either removed from or intended for an Il-Khanid manuscript, perhaps a Mongol history, which recall painting done at the Rab'-i Rashidi in Tabriz; the roundels in this drawing mimic the enthronement scenes found throughout those illustrations, particularly details of accoutrements and costume like the distinctive female headgear.⁶⁸ The crisp execution and precise flowing line

point to the patronage of Iskandar-Sultan at Shiraz, and the floral and animal vignettes outside the roundels closely parallel drawings linked with the prince.⁷¹ Further confirmation of Iskandar's interest in his Turco-Mongol ancestry is an enthronement scene of a Mongol ruler and his wife in the Lisbon *Anthology* of 1410–11, which likely copies in both composition and coloring an Il-Khanid source.⁷²

AB. M. S. İspirioğlu, *Saray-Alben: Düz'liche Klebeblätter aus dem Berliner Sammlungen*, vol. 8 of *Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland*, ed. Wolfgang Voigt (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1964).

69. See a detached leaf from a *Diwan* of Salman Sawayi in Geneva, illustrated in Dahl Jones and George Michell, eds., *The Arts of Islam*, exh. cat., Hayward Gallery (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1976), p. 335, no. 348.

70. Basil Gray, "The School of Shiraz," p. 133, no. 74.

cat. no. 61 *Angel in a Cloud*
Herat(?), c. 1425–50
Ink on paper
7.5 x 7.5 cm (3 x 3 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.43, #1

Angels bearing platters of flame amidst fiery clouds were common elements in painted scenes of the Prophet Muhammad's *mir'aj*. They also occur in other contexts, such as the depiction of Majnun at the Ka'ba from the *Khamsa* of Nizami. One such illustration (cat. no. 32, f. 121b), in fact, features the distinctive facial type attributed to Khwaja Ali of Tabriz that is also seen in this drawing.⁷³ A curious, recurrent feature in the depiction of angels during this period is the leafy hat seen here, which is also worn by houria in some depictions and may have paradisaical connotations.⁷⁴

71. Grube and Sims, "The School of Herat," p. 162.

72. Marie-Rose Séguy, *The Miraculous Journey of Mahomet* (New York: George Braziller, 1977), pl. 41.

cat. no. 62 *Haft paykar of Nizami*
Copied by Azhar
Herat(?), c. 1425–50
66 folios with 5 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
14.9 x 12.4 cm (5 7/8 x 4 7/8 in.)
New York, Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of Alexander Smith Cochran, 1913, 13.228.13

This long-controversial manuscript has in the past been attributed frequently to Baysunghur's *kitabkhana*, although stylistic, codicological, and paleographic considerations now tend to preclude that possibility. In all likelihood a fifteenth-century work imitating a now-lost Baysunghuri original, the manuscript was presented to the Mughal emperor Akbar in the late sixteenth century; it also contains the seal of his grandson Shahjahan.⁷⁵ Its provenance is further complicated by minute signatures of Bihzad, a late fifteenth-century Timurid artist, on each of the illustrations, perhaps additions designed to exploit Mughal interest in their ancestor's artistic legacy. A

nearly exact duplicate of this composition is found in the 1445–46 *Khamsa* copied for Ismar al-Dunya at Herat (cat. no. 32, f. 154b).⁷⁶

73. A. V. Williams Jackson and Abraham Yuhannan, *A Catalogue of the Collection of Persian Manuscripts Including Also Some Turkish and Arabic Presented to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, by Alexander Smith Cochran* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1914), pp. 73–74.

74. Topkapı Sarayı Library, H.781, f. 154b; see Appendix III, no. 1b.

cat. no. 63 *The Craftsmen of Jamshid*
Herat, c. 1430
Ink on paper
12.5 x 10 cm (4 7/8 x 3 7/8 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.77, #1

The reign of the legendary king Jamshid was a golden age in the *Shahnama*'s epic view of Iranian history. It was during this time that metalwork, armor, architecture, and textiles among other arts and crafts were perfected. This delicate rendition of the king's craftsmen at work is one of several extant components in both the Berlin and Istanbul albums related to compositions found in Baysunghur ibn Shahrukh's 1430 *Shahnama*⁷⁷ and inserted into later compositions as well.⁷⁸ Other components of Baysunghur's *Shahnama* that survive as drawings include the double-page frontispiece (H.2152, f. 45a), a warrior from "Murder of Siyavush" (H.2152, f. 62b), the entire composition and the figure of Rostam from "Rostam Lassoos the Khaqan of Chin" (Diez album ff. 73.S.57, #6; 5.76, #2; and H.2152, f. 87b), and a mounted warrior from "Isfandiyar Slays Arjasp" (H.2152, f. 93a).⁷⁹

75. Arthur Upham Pope and Phyllis Ackerman, eds., *A Survey of Persian Art from Prehistoric Times to the Present* (London: Oxford University Press, 1939), 3 pl. 871b.

76. See Appendix III, no. 2.

77. Leoni, "Painting at Herat," pp. 126, 128–16.

cat. no. 64 *Shirin Spies the Portrait of Khusraw*
Herat, c. 1425–30
Opaque watercolor and ink on paper
17.5 x 12.5 cm (6 7/8 x 4 7/8 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.76, #2

Assimilating with some modification elements found in other Baysunghuri drawings and illustrations, this unfinished manuscript illustration provides a rare glimpse of one stage in the production of a text illustration. Collaborative by nature and apparently varied in its order of execution, the creation of paintings for books likely involved a number of hands for underdrawing, applying color, ornamenting with gold, drawing rules, and burnishing surfaces. This underdrawing depicts a pivotal moment in the story of Shirin and Khusraw from Nizami's *Khamsa*: the kindling of Shirin's love for Khusraw Parviz, the Iranian king. Beguiled by a description of the beautiful Armenian princess, Khusraw ordered his portrait hung from a tree to test Shirin's reaction. On seeing the portrait during an outing with her maidens, she became entranced, embrac-

ing it as if it were alive. Alarmed, her maidens, fearing it the work of demons, were forced to take it from her. The elaborate imagery Nizami employed in his text to describe this scene ironically underlines the ambivalent reactions of fear and attraction historically aroused by the notion of portraiture in Islamic culture.⁷⁸

78. For a discussion of this phenomenon, see Priscilla Soucek, "Nizami on Painters and Painting," *Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, ed. Richard Ettinghausen (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1972), pp. 15–18.

- cat. no. 65 *Sulrab's Battle with the Female Warrior Gurdafarid*
Iran, c. 1425–50
Ink on paper
22 x 12 cm (8 1/4 x 4 3/4 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.70, #1

This remnant possibly from a *Shahnama* of Firdawsi manuscript lost or perhaps never completed reveals a compositional device that would be used to great effect later in the fifteenth century. By means of bold diagonals an illusion of space and distance is created in two dimensions, an effect aided by the emphatic verticality of the page. More convincing applications can be found in later Herat manuscripts, like the *Zafarnama* executed for Sultan-Husayn Mirza (cat. no. 147), and it eventually appeared in such early imperial Mughal manuscripts as the *Akbarnama* (History of Akbar; c. 1590).⁷⁹ The fairy-tale atmosphere of the *Shahnama* (c. 1444) produced for Muhammad-Juki (cat. no. 43) is recalled in this underdrawing, as deadly combat is transformed into a fanciful tug-of-war played out astride rockinghorse mounts. The skeletal structure of a Timurid manuscript illustration is also revealed here. The conventions governing expression in this visual category yielded a work whose primary aim is to provide support for the solid areas of color ornamented with gold that would be overlaid. Its taut lines emphasize the fundamental importance of design in the production of the iconic imagery so admired by the Timurid house.

79. Stuart Cary Welch, *Imperial Mughal Painting* (New York: George Braziller, 1978), pp. 62–85, pls. 12–15.

- cat. no. 66 *Master and Pupils*
Iran, c. 1425–50
Ink on paper
14 x 11.5 cm (5 1/2 x 4 1/2 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 72.S.18, #4

Pouncing, the practice of pricking the outlines of a design for transfer to another surface, was basic to kitabkhana practice. The original drawing was pricked with a stylus, then laid upon another surface and "pounced" with charcoal or other powder forced through the tiny holes. Connecting the dots, the copy was completed. By this means figures and designs were uniformly disseminated through manuscripts, paintings and drawings, wall painting, and a wide variety of textiles and objects in other media. Entire compositions, such as this much-used pounce of conversing figures, were subject to transfer by these means.

- cat. no. 67 *The Fire Ordeal of Siyavush*

Shiraz(?), c. 1400–1425
Opaque watercolor and gold on paper
29 x 20.5 cm (11 1/2 x 8 1/4 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 71.S.27

This early Timurid painting, possibly intended for inclusion in a *Shahnama* manuscript, evokes a dramatic moment in the *Shahnama*. For resisting his stepmother's incestuous passion, Siyavush, the son of King Kay Kaus and one of the epic's tragic figures, was twice accused by her of the very act he refused. To resolve the matter, the king ordered one hundred caravan loads of wood heaped into two mountains of flame through which his son was to ride unharmed to prove his innocence. Siyavush emerged unscathed from this ordeal, and in both Persian literature and painting the moment served as a powerful symbol of the triumph of virtue.

- cat. no. 68 *Fighting Camels*

Iran, c. 1400–1450
Ink on paper
17.5 x 24.5 cm (6 7/8 x 9 3/4 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.67, #6

Sparse and diagrammatic in expression, this work may be the earliest surviving example of what would later become a popular theme in painting and drawing in the Persianate world. More a design pattern than a drawing, the subject was fully elaborated in a painting of about 1525 attributed to Bihzad, which in turn was at least twice closely copied in India for the Mughal dynasty.⁸⁰ The motif of fighting camels illustrates in its most elemental form what the artist Sadiq Beg described at the end of the sixteenth century in his *Qanun al-sun'ar* (Canons of painting) as *girift-u gir*, the "give and take" of animals locked in combat.⁸¹

80. Laurence Binyon et al., *Persian Miniature Painting* (reprint, New York: Dover, 1971), pl. 77A–B.

81. Martin Bernard Dickson and Stuart Cary Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 264–65.

- cat. no. 69 *Cityscape*

Iran, c. 1400–1450
Ink on paper
13 x 17 cm (5 1/8 x 6 3/4 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 70.S.26 unten

There are few precedents in Persian painting for cityscapes such as this curious example. During the fifteenth century, however, Timurid manuscripts began to include urban vistas such as the depiction of Mecca in Iskandar's 1410–11 *Anthology* (cat. no. 35, ff. 362b–363a) and the panoramic view of Baghdad besieged by Hulagu included in a *Jami' al-tawarikh* of about 1410–20.⁸² With its

distinctive dome atop high drums, tall, arching iwans, and glimpses of hidden gardens, this drawing preserves a hint of the character and density of the cities that dominated Timurid life during the fifteenth century.

82. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Suppl. Pers. 1113; F. R. Martin, *The Miniature Paintings and Painters of Persia, India and Turkey* (reprint, London: Holland Press, 1968), pl. 42.

cat. no. 70 *Female Figure with Flowers*

Iran, c. 1425–50
Ink on paper
29.5 x 26 cm (11 5/8 x 10 1/4 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.38

This detailed depiction of a lady of the court is startling in its immediacy and rarity. Distinctive is the attention to certain elements such as the voluminous swelling of limbs against bunching fabric and the relatively detailed articulation of jewelry and costume features. Inescapable, however, is the fact that like so much Timurid drawing this remains fundamentally an exercise in design. The solid features of the body are delineated by a smooth confluence of lines, the hand and fingers rendered as little more than a structural assemblage of similar components. Like the flowers in her hand, she remains abstracted, the idealized inhabitant of a perfect realm.

cat. no. 71 *Seated Male Figure*

Iran or Central Asia, c. 1425–50
Opaque watercolor and ink on paper
26 x 24 cm (10 1/4 x 9 1/2 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.9, #1

Typical of the Timurid blend of urban and steppe symbols is this unfinished portrait of a male figure, perhaps an amir. Seated on a low chair of Chinese inspiration, gripping a handkerchief, and clothed in a radiant chinoiserie robe, he is a picture of urban refinement. Betraying his Turkic origins and no doubt true sentiments, however, are high boots and fur cap, marks, not of the city dweller, but of the nomad.

cat. no. 72 *Female Figure*

Herat, c. 1425–50
Ink on paper
13 x 20.5 cm (5 1/8 x 8 1/4 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 72.S.4, #3

This depiction of a corpulent female represents a highly unusual slip of the Timurid facade of royal perfection. It is in essence an inflated version of the usual idealized court maiden. Unlikely as a

candidate for inclusion in a royal Timurid manuscript, it may well portray a family member or one of the palace staff.

cat. no. 73 *Female Head*

Herat(?), c. 1425–50
Ink on paper
11 x 8.5 cm (4 1/8 x 3 3/8 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.69, #4

Examples of portraiture occur so rarely in Timurid art that its salient features remain unclear. While the identity of this female head will never be known, its conformity to acknowledged ideals of royal representation strongly suggest a noble lineage. Glacial and imperious, her demeanor would no doubt have been common at Timurid courts.

cat. no. 74 *Male Head*

Herat(?), c. 1425–50
Ink on paper
16 x 11 cm (6 1/4 x 4 3/8 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.63, #7

Cobralike in pose and intensity, this extraordinarily powerful portrait is a masterful study in the graphic precision that characterized much of Timurid draftsmanship. Its razor-sharp line brings to life with very few strokes a figure both elegant and frightening. Tightly pursed lips, hypnotic eyes inlaid in the blank plane of the face, a mustache resembling needles: the inference is one of potential violence. While the distinctive turban with its coiled folds and trailing end is often associated with Muzaffarid and Jalayirid illustration, it is equally common in Timurid work.⁸¹

81. See, for example, Topkapı Sarayı Library R.1022, f.114b, Grube and Sims, "The School of Herat," p. 197, fig. 92.

cat. no. 75 *Fragment of a Landscape*

Iran, c. 1400–1450
Ink on paper
17 x 26 cm (6 3/4 x 10 1/4 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.72, #4

Timurid artists revealed talents that ranged far beyond traditional manuscript illustration as in this fantastic drawing of plant and animal life. While many elements—the rabbits, duck, rock forms, and contorted tree with podlike leaves—can be traced to Chinese sources, the fluency and exuberance of their expression are manifestations of Timurid artistic imagination. The composition places plant forms and a swooping duck in the open space above the groundline, their forms tumbling through the air as if uprooted, hastened in their motion by the tree's sympathetic inclination. A

smooth, calligraphic line animates the composition, and no element appears more vital than a majestic fan-shaped plant, impaled by its own leaves, which folds and coils upon itself.

- cat. no. 76 *Fantastic Plant*
Iran, c. 1400–1450
Ink on paper
25.5 x 26.5 cm (10 x 10 1/2 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.74, #2

One of many variations on the plant-and-water fowl theme found in the Berlin and Istanbul albums, this whimsical example places birds at rest upon each frond of an imaginary plant. The combination of black and red inks, the latter apparently used primarily for the preliminary stages of drawings, suggest a study. The purpose of these vegetal exotica as a whole remains unknown. In all likelihood they served mainly as models for the decoration of a variety of surfaces, yet the complexity and finish of a number of them suggests that they also may have been intended as independent drawings.

- cat. no. 77 *Fantastic Plant*
Iran, c. 1400–1450
Ink on paper
23.5 x 28.5 cm (9 1/4 x 11 1/4 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.74, #1

The inspiration for this motif in Timurid art—a plant or flower isolated or flanked by water fowl at its base—came in the form of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century imported Chinese textiles, ceramics, or other decorative objects.⁸⁴ The kitabkhana, however, extrapolated far beyond these models. Heraldic in effect, this symmetrical vegetal fantasy reveals itself with peacocklike radiance, its soft, feathery fringes modeled with ink washes that impart a sense of tangibility absent from manuscript illustration.

84. Regina Krahl, "Porcelain of the Yuan and Early Ming Dynasties," in *Chinese Ceramics in the Topkapı Sarayı Museum*, ed. John Ayers (London: Sotheby's Publications, 1986), 2, 197, cat. no. 375; 409, cat. no. 581.

- cat. no. 78 *Stag*
Iran, c. 1400–1450
Ink on paper
14.5 x 21.5 cm (5 3/4 x 8 1/2 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 72.S.10, #1

Although the stag was considered an emblem of long life in traditional Chinese art and belief, it is not likely that this connotation was widely recognized among the cultural elite in the Turco-Iranian world of the fifteenth century. This magnificent animal, its form comprised of a two-dimensional arrangement of lines devoid of any

sense of volume and weight, typifies the kitabkhana's reduction of imagery to its own conventions.

- cat. no. 79 *Phoenix*
Iran, c. 1400–1450
Ink on paper
9 x 13.5 cm (3 1/2 x 5 1/4 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.47, #2

The mythological phoenix, the vehicle of countless allusions in Chinese literature and thought, played a major role in Chinese art as well. Its auspicious attributes as a symbol of peace and prosperity and of the sun made it a favorite decorative motif in ceremonial costume among the empresses of China.⁸⁵ In the wake of the Mongol invasions of the Islamic world the iconography of the phoenix was assimilated to the *amurgh*, a mythical bird with magical properties in Muslim lore. From the fourteenth century on in works like the *Shahnama* its depiction followed the Chinese model, normally that of a heron or eagle-like bird with a long tail.⁸⁶ This evocative copy from a Chinese source, perhaps a female leaving her nest, conveys in its quick strokes a spontaneity that was normally channeled into conventional form for use in Timurid manuscript illustration and decoration.

85. C. A. S. Williams, *Encyclopedia of Chinese Symbolism and Art Motives* (New York: Julian Press, 1960), pp. 319.

86. E. Baer, *Sphinxes and Harpers in Medieval Islamic Art: An Iconographic Study* (Jerusalem: Israel Oriental Society, 1963), p. 41.

- cat. no. 80 *Two Angels*
Herat(?), c. 1425–50
Ink on paper
23.5 x 31.5 cm (9 1/4 x 12 1/2 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.61, #1

The specific subject of this enigmatic drawing of two angels—one with an oval lidded container, the other carrying a sealed pouch—is not known. While possibly a finished study for inclusion in a work like the *Mir'at al-ma'ani* (where angels and houris, often of unusual proportions and in a variety of headgear, including leafy hats such as these, are seen carrying various objects)⁸⁷ these angels could equally have been executed as an independent drawing.

87. Séguy, *Miraculous Journey*, pls. 1, 29, 16, 42–43.

- cat. no. 81 *Angel Hovering above Flames*
Shiraz(?), c. 1400–1425
Opaque watercolor and gold on paper
17 x 11 cm (6 1/2 x 4 1/4 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 71.S.28 links

Unusual in subject and composition, this enigmatic painting is not accompanied by text that would aid in its identification. It may refer to an episode concerning the prophet Ibrahim (the Old Testament Abraham), celebrated in Islam for his early embrace of monotheism. For smashing idols worshiped by his heathen compatriots, Ibrahim was cast into a fire, a story mentioned in the Koran (suras 19:24, 21:68–70, 37:84–99) but elaborated in later Islamic prophetic literature. Hurled into the fire by a catapult, he was met in midair by the angel Gabriel, from whom he refused help, claiming God alone was his guardian. Indeed, once in the flames Ibrahim was clothed with garments from Paradise and seated upon a golden throne.⁸⁸ Whether or not this painting illustrates that episode, it clearly shows how Timurid patronage in its early phases witnessed considerable experimentation with proportions, formats, and scale in pictorial imagery.

88. Wheeler Thackston, trans., *The Tales of the Prophets of al-Kutub* (Bantam: Twayne, 1978), pp. 166–68.

- cat. no. 82 *Mounted Warrior Fighting a Dragon*
Inscribed to Muhammad Khayyam
Herat(?), c. 1425–50
Ink on paper
30 x 42 cm (11 3/4 x 16 1/2 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 70.S.24

Long an emblem of pride and power in the Iranian monarchical tradition, hunt imagery symbolically affirmed a ruler's might as well as his mastery over the forces of nature. The depiction of the hunt was common in illustrated manuscripts like the *Shahnama* (fig. 42) and Nizami's *Khamsa* (cat. no. 32, f. 154b) as well as in earlier ceramics and metalwork. As a symbol of both rule and sport, hunting was eagerly embraced by the Timurid house as a princely prerogative. According to Dawlatshah, Ulugh-Beg even kept a ledger recording his prey in the field.⁸⁹ This drawing, bearing the ubiquitous signature of Muhammad Khayyam, features a Timurid warrior in a mythical confrontation that recalls such literary models as the hero Isfandiyar in the *Shahnama* or the king Bahram Gur in the *Khamsa*, both of whom slew dragons. Highly detailed in its depiction of Timurid armor and military accoutrements, it was likely intended as a visual panegyric for a member of the ruling house, perhaps as a study for a painted version. The figure of the dragon is appropriated from Chinese textiles or ceramics, inserted into this context with minor modifications.⁹⁰

89. "Dawlatshah," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.

90. For a similar depiction of a dragon in early fifteenth-century Ming ceramics, see Krahl, "Porcelain," p. 421, fig. 609.

- cat. no. 83 *Khusraw Spies Shirin Bathing*
Inscribed to Muhammad Khayyam
Iran, c. 1400–1450
Ink on paper
12.7 x 20.9 cm (5 x 8 1/4 in.)
Geneva, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, 198

While unmentioned in the *tadhkiras*, the artist whose signature is found here, Muhammad Khayyam, appears to have been a prolific, if often idiosyncratic member of the Timurid *kitabkhana*. Judging from the drawings now preserved in Istanbul which bear attributions to him, his fertile imagination generated subjects ranging from fantastic landscapes and whimsical beasts to giant, black-skinned musicians.⁹¹ Most drawings, like this unorthodox interpretation of one of the most frequently painted images from Persian literature, feature his odd sense of proportion, an elastic line, a proclivity for blank space juxtaposed with areas of solid black, and a humorous, almost satirical attitude toward his subject matter.

91. Tughlak Sarayi Library Ms 112, ff. 45b, 51b, 163–b, 618, 64b, 87b; for works by this artist in the Diez album, see Erna Kuhnelt, "Malernamen in den Berliner 'Saray Alben,'" in *Kunst des Orients* 3 (1959): 66–77.

- cat. no. 84 *A Princely Couple with Attendants*
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1425–50
Opaque watercolor and gold on silk
21.6 x 30.2 cm (8 1/2 x 11 7/8 in.)
New York, Lent by the Metropolitan Museum
of Art, bequest of Cora Timken Burnett,
1957, 57.53.24

A prince or youth offering a maiden a cup of wine was a commonplace occurrence at court as well as in Persian poetry and painting. Consequently works on silk like this one were endowed with contemporary significance as well as metaphorical potency. The deployment of figures against a neutral spatial plane is a standard formula derived from Chinese figure painting, and the contorted flowering tree further confirms China as a primary source of influence. The final effect is purely Timurid, however, for it embodies both in content and expression the courtly ideal sought by the royal house.

- cat. no. 85 *Four Figures beneath a Tree*
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1425–50
Opaque watercolor and gold on silk
19 x 28 cm (7 1/2 x 11 in.)
Kuwait National Museum, the al-Sabah Collection,
Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyya, LNS 77 MS

Timurid paintings on silk generally depict encounters between luxuriously costumed lovers and are among the most exquisite creations of the Turco-Iranian milieu of the fifteenth century. While lacking text, works like this recall in their formal conception many of the conventions of Persian poetry, an effect undoubtedly derived from the influence of poetic manuscript illustration. The scale and spatial relationships of manuscript illustration have been altered, but the effectiveness and beauty of the image are still dependent upon articulation by means of a careful, fluid line, glowing pigments, and juxtaposition of highly codified elements—all concerns that were perfected in manuscript illumination. Works of this kind may well have been considered visual poetry, painted analogues to the *qasidas* and *ghazals* so common to Timurid court life.

cat. no. 86

A Prince Seated in a Garden

Iran or Central Asia, c. 1425–50
 Opaque watercolor and gold on silk
 31.4 x 23.2 cm (12 1/4 x 9 1/8 in.)
 Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Bartlett Fund and
 Special Contribution, 14.545

The Istanbul albums feature numerous bird-and-flower scenes, some of Chinese origin but most copied by Muslim artists. Imaginative manipulation of the genre by the artists of the kitabkhana led in turn to original creations like this brightly hued, abstracted garden scene. By virtue of its scale and placement on the surface, a borrowed bird-and-flower motif creates a paradoxical illusion of both distance and intimacy. The size of the motif suggests proximity to the picture plane, while the eye is directed through the flowering branches of a tree into the rarefied confines of a garden sanctuary. The emotional reserve and formal perfection of the figures, delineated and placed with the same care as the vessels and plate of pomegranates in the foreground, indicate that they also have been extracted from another source, in this case poetic manuscript illustration.

cat. no. 87

Two Lohans

Iran or Central Asia, c. 1400–1450
 Ink on paper
 34.6 x 23.8 cm (13 5/8 x 9 3/8 in.)
 New York, Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of
 Art, Rogers Fund, 1968, 68.48

This Timurid copy of two jovial *lohangs* (canonical Buddhist saints) represents an iconographical type apparently introduced into Chinese painting by the famous Song master Li Gonglin during the twelfth century. The original from which the Timurid version was made, almost certainly a work of the Yuan period (1260–1368), was likely in the *baumiao* technique.⁹² Superbly executed in reed pen rather than the usual brush, it reflects the ongoing Timurid fascination with chinoiserie as well as their Central Asian origins.

Heterodox religious sects had long been a part of the confluence of peoples, beliefs, and cultures that was Central Asia, and with the introduction of Islam in the eighth century it often became difficult to distinguish between the practices of various religious groups, particularly Turkish Tantric Buddhists and wandering Muslim mystics.⁹³ While this drawing may well have derived from a cult picture of the late thirteenth century, when Buddhism was the state religion of Mongol Iran,⁹⁴ its subject matter was frequently exploited by fifteenth-century artists in Iran and evokes the broader socio-religious boundaries of the Turco-Iranian world. Figures of this type often appear in paintings as wildly eccentric figures meant perhaps to represent members of Central Asian dervish orders like the Qalandar.⁹⁵

92. Basil Gray, "A Timurid Copy of a Chinese Buddhist Picture," in *Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, p. 21.

93. Emil Evi, "Muhammad Sayyid Qalam and the Inner Asian Turkish Tradition," in *Between Iran and China*, p. 94.

94. Gray, "A Timurid Copy," p. 16.

95. Ibid., "Muhammad Sayyid Qalam," pp. 94–97, figs. 185–88.

cat. no. 88

Jug

Made by Sher Ali ibn Muhammad Dimashqi
 Herat(?), dated A.H. Jumada II 872
 (A.D. January 1468)
 Brass inlaid with gold and silver
 16.3 x 13.3 (diam.) cm (6 1/2 x 5 1/8 in.)
 Istanbul, Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, 2963

Although the patron of this finely crafted vessel is unknown, it has been suggested that its maker may have been from a family associated with Samarkand.⁹⁶ At least one other vessel, a bucket formerly in the collection of F. R. Martin, is known to have been made by this craftsman.⁹⁷ The principal inscription on the jug reflects the vessel's associations with revelry and feasting; it can be read in part as

(The days of roses and merrymaking have come
 Cupbearer, give us the water of life)
 It is not possible to be alive
 One day that does not pass in pleasure
 (Pleasant is the rose-colored bowl on the greenery
 Crimson-colored wine among the tulips.)⁹⁸

96. Komaroff, "The Timurid Phase," pp. 509–11, cat. no. 43.

97. Ibid., p. 44. For a reproduction of this bucket, see F. R. Martin, *Altäre Kapfenstein aus dem Orient* (Stockholm: 1902), pl. 15.

98. Ibid., p. 510.

cat. no. 89

Fragment of a Tombstone

Iran or Central Asia, c. 1450–1500
 Basalt
 38 x 58 cm (15 x 22 3/4 in.)
 Paris, Musée du Louvre, Section Islamique,
 MAO 342

Little is known of the development of the carving technique that characterizes this stone fragment. Known as *haft qalam* (seven scripts), presumably in light of its obvious calligraphic qualities, it seems to have culminated at Timurid Herat in the late fifteenth century; a spectacularly intricate example dated A.H. 902 (A.D. 1496–97) at the nearby shrine of Gazargah perhaps represents the epitome of the tradition.⁹⁹ While less delicate and complex, the Louvre fragment's beautiful carving nonetheless preserves the dynamic decorative vocabulary and precise execution typical of these tombstones. Reflective of the taste that pervaded the court of Sultan-Husayn Mirza, they stand at considerable technical and aesthetic distance from the simple elegance of earlier Timurid tombstones.¹⁰⁰

99. Lisa Golombek, *The Timurid Shrine at Gazargah*, Art and Archaeology Occasional Paper, no. 15 (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1969), figs. 124–25.

100. A. A. Semenov, "Inscriptions on the Tombs of Timur and His Descendants in the Gur-e Arzu," *Epigraphica Vostoka* 3 (1949): 49–62.

cat. no. 90

Cloud Collar Poem with Fantastic Plant

Iran, c. 1400–1450
 Ink on paper
 36.5 x 33 cm (14 3/8 x 12 3/4 in.)

Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.67, #3

348 Stunning chinoiserie fantasies of this caliber were much admired at the Timurid court. Consisting of cloud bands, qilin, cranes, deer, ducks, lotus, and peonies, the drawing encompasses a large part of the decorative vocabulary assembled by the kutabhkhana from a variety of sources. Recast in symmetrical form in accordance with Timurid design principles, the elements of the composition are drawn in a silken, sinuous line that imparts a supernatural motion.

cat. no. 91 *Design for a Quiver*

Iran, c. 1400–1450
Ink on paper
37 x 39.5 cm (14 5/8 x 15 1/2 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.49, #1

The shape of this drawing suggests a working design for the decoration of a quiver of the kind frequently seen in Timurid painting. Arranged to fit within its contours is a phoenix, its tail streaming skyward as if aflame. While this quiver was clearly intended for royal use and reflects the sophisticated, acquired tastes of the Timurid elite, quivers are also found depicted during this period with leopard tails attached (fig. 66). Quivers with tail ornaments are seen in earlier Il-Khanid painting, and while their meaning is not known, they may well carry a specific Turco-Mongol connotation.¹⁰¹

101. Oleg Grabar and Sheila Blair, *Epic Images and Contemporary History: The Illustrations of the Great Mongol Shahnameh* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pls. 65, 87, 11.

cat. no. 92 *Lobed Medallion with Animal Combat*

Iran, c. 1400–1450
Ink on paper
8 x 8 cm (3 1/8 x 3 1/8 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.71, #8

Cleverly arranged to conform with the lobed outline of the medallion, this juxtaposition of protagonists is a Timurid interpretation. In Chinese art and literature the phoenix, a benevolent animal, does not prey on living creatures and is not depicted in combat. There is a possibility that the artist intended the more aggressive simurgh, but in all likelihood the creature was simply used for its decorative qualities, appropriated more for its aesthetic and decorative potential than its external referents.

cat. no. 93 *Panel with Phoenix*

Iran, c. 1400–1450
Ink on paper
22 x 32 cm (8 5/8 x 12 5/8 in.)

Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.63, #2

The distinctive shape of drawings such as this are puzzling both in terms of origin and purpose. They do not appear to be found in Chinese textile decoration or in Timurid illustration and may have remained simply a kutabhkhana form for decorative drawing. Three panels similar to this drawing are found on folio 71b of album H.2153 in the Topkapı Sarayı Library, showing dragons and waterbirds ingeniously positioned within their frames.¹⁰²

102. Grube, "Notes on the Decorative Arts," fig. 189.

cat. no. 94 *Medallion with Peacock*

Iran, c. 1400–1450
Ink on paper
33 x 31.5 cm (13 x 12 3/8 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.70, #3

Widely recognized in many Asian cultural traditions as a symbol of beauty, the peacock was not a common decorative motif in Timurid art. The appearance of the peacock in this context was perhaps suggested by the exuberant, feathery plants so frequently found in medallion designs. Symmetry and precision of execution mark its depiction here, the surrounding space filled with whipping tendrils that further charge the composition.

cat. no. 95 *Cloud Collar Point with Crane*

Iran, c. 1400–1450
Ink on paper
35 x 33.5 cm (13 7/8 x 13 1/8 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.41, #2

The lobed, cusped medallions that constitute a distinct group of Timurid decorative drawing are usually designated as cloud collar points. Referring to the elaborately embroidered collar decoration of Chinese origin popular with Turco-Mongol elites in Iran during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, they were perhaps derived from other media, such as Chinese ceramics, using the same motif.¹⁰³ Many of these drawings no doubt functioned as models for transfer to other surfaces, yet the superb draftsmanship and finished state of this drawing raises the possibility that at least some were conceived as independent drawings.

103. Krabi, "Porcelain," pp. 197, 128, nos. 578, 405, cat. nos. 188, 407, cat. no. 586.

cat. no. 96 *Cloud Collar Point with Fantastic Beings*

Iran, c. 1400–1450
Opaque watercolor and ink on paper
42.5 x 35 cm (16 3/4 x 13 3/4 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer

Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.54, #1

Barely contained within its frame, the quicksilver motion and playfulness of this imaginary scene are diametrically opposed to the formal reserve of Timurid manuscript illustration. The focus of the scene is a pair of qilin, fabulous creatures of Chinese origin that are represented in a wide variety of guises. Whether depicted as a leonine animal with scales and horns or an elegant, cloven-footed beast with a flowing mane, this creature was a forceful stimulus of the Timurid artistic imagination (cat. no. 40). Under the benign gaze of a Timurid angel, these creatures dart and swirl in whimsical combat, the atmosphere alive with blowing reeds, flapping wings, and clouds that boil and churn in the sky above.

cat. no. 97 *Cloud Collar Point with Kufic Medallion*
Iran, c. 1400–1450
Ink on paper
30.5 x 30.5 cm (12 x 12 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.60, #2

The Timurid genius for synthesizing traditional Islamic design with Chinese decorative devices is apparent in wondrous examples like this drawing. Given substance by means of subtle modeling with washes, a cloud collar point is animated by a lacy network of vines and lush blossoms that whirl around a stylized kufic medallion, which reads *al-rahman* (the merciful), a divine allusion. Like some intricate botanical clockwork, the precision of its design is flawless and eternal.

cat. no. 98 *Medallion with Tortoise*
Iran, c. 1400–1450
Opaque watercolor and ink on paper
34.5 x 34 cm (13 5/8 x 13 3/8 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.51, #2

One of the imaginative marvels of the Timurid kitabkhana, this drawing shares many qualities with the intricate constructions seen in contemporary illumination. Replacing the usual vegetal and floral arabesque forms found in *debachas* and *'unwans* is a complex network of interlaced birds, their bodies twisted into impossible contortions. Swimming within this animated ring is a majestic tortoise, whose circular form and flailing appendages spin in cooling patterns of water. Representations of tortoises in Islamic Iran are known from a fourteenth-century manuscript version of the animal fables known as *Kalila u Dimna*, where they were largely derived from Chinese sources.¹⁰⁴ This more fanciful example, probably drawn from a Chinese model as well, shows the tortoise grasping in its mouth the Chinese fungus of immortality (*lingzhi*), which also appears in numerous Persian drawings and paintings in the Istanbul albums.

104. Ernst Kühnel, *Persian Painting in the Fourteenth Century: A Research Report* (Naples: Istituto Orientale di Napoli, 1976), fig. 31.

cat. no. 99 *Mathnawi-i ma'navi of Jalaluddin Rumi*
Copied for Sultan-Husayn Mirza
Herat, dated A.H. 887 (A.D. 1483)
330 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
25.8 x 17.5 cm (10 1/8 x 6 7/8 in.)
Istanbul, Türk ve Islam Eserleri Müzesi, 1905

The text of the *Mathnawi-i ma'navi* (Spiritual Mathnawi) is one of the most esteemed in Islamic literature. A work of unbridled ecstatic vision, its twenty-five thousand lines are considered the finest achievement of Persian mysticism. As a veritable lexicon of Sufi lore it epitomizes many of the interests of the court of Sultan-Husayn Mirza, and this copy executed for the sultan represents a particularly felicitous crystallization of the mysticism and aestheticism that pervaded elite cultural life in Herat late in the fifteenth century. While the pages and extraordinarily fine lacquer cover are enlivened by rich decoration that presages later Safavid work, it is the interior leather doublures that command attention as one of the most outstanding examples of bookbinding art in existence. A flawless, highly inventive example of leather filigree (*munabbatkari*), the technique was credited by Dost-Muhammad to the master bookbinder Qiwamuddin of Tabriz, whom Baysunghur brought to Herat to work on his *jung*.¹⁰⁵ Inscribed on the exterior and interior of the fore-edge flap are these admonitory couplets:

If you tread the path of form until doomsday,
You will smell the aroma of meaning until doomsday.
If you want the soul of the masters,
Read the *Mathnawi-i ma'navi* of Mawlana (Rumi).

105. "Dost-Muhammad," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.

cat. no. 100 *Arabesque Medallion*
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1400–1450
Ink on paper
27 x 21 cm (10 5/8 x 8 3/8 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.34, #1

The endlessly rich repertoire of traditional Islamic arabesque designs was adapted for a variety of media and contexts.¹⁰⁶ An infinite number of variations on this well-established theme were transferred by the kitabkhana from models like this one into illumination, bookbinding, wall painting, stone and wood carving, and textiles.

106. Ernst Kühnel, *The Arabesque: Meaning and Transformation of an Ornament*, trans. Richard Ettinghausen (reprint, Graz: Verlag für Sammler, 1976).

cat. no. 101 *Jami' al-usul of Ibn al-Ashir*
Herat, dated A.H. 839 (A.D. 1435–36)
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
34.5 x 26.5 cm (13 5/8 x 10 5/8 in.)
Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library, Ms. 5282

Madjuddin Abu'l-Sa'adat al-Mubarak (1149–1210), known as Ibn

al-Athir, belonged to a respected family of scholars. He spent his entire adult life in government service in Mosul (Iraq) and achieved fame in the fields of philology and religious studies. His *hadith* (Traditions of the Prophet) collection, entitled *Jami' al-usul* (Collection of traditions), gained wide currency as a standard reference work in the medieval Islamic world.¹⁰⁷ This Timurid version is perhaps the finest extant example. In addition to its masterful opening illumination, a brilliant exposition of kitabkhana design principles, the leather binding is particularly noteworthy. Impressed with more than 350,000 blind-tooled stamps and 43,000 gold ones, it also features superb leather filigree over lapis lazuli and gold leaf on the interior.¹⁰⁸

107. F. Rosenthal, "Ibn al-Athir" in *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, new ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill; London: Luzac & Co., 1971), 1: 723–24.

108. David James, *Islamic Masterpieces of the Chester Beatty Library* (London: World of Islam Festival, 1981), p. 16, cat. no. 18.

cat. no. 102 *Koran*

Herat(?), c. 1425–50
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
25.8 x 19 cm (10 1/8 x 7 1/2 in.)
Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library, Ms. 1500

A curious feature of Koran production during the Timurid period is the large number of manuscripts purported to be by Yaqut al-Mustasimi (d. 1298) and his followers. Considered one of the great masters of Arabic calligraphy, he was widely admired among the Timurid princes, as evidenced by Baysunghur's album of calligraphy by Yaqut and his pupils.¹⁰⁹ It is not likely that all "Yaqut" Korans were considered forgeries, for a number, such as this copy, were certainly produced as calligraphic facsimiles of genuine Yaqut manuscripts.¹¹⁰ This archaizing tendency was extended to the illumination, where one finds the traditional centrifugal compositions of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries intact; only their forms have been transformed by the lyricizing effect of Timurid design.

109. Topkapı Sarayı Library, H. 8122; see p. 113.

110. James, *Qur'ans and Bindings*, pp. 68, 72, cat. no. 38.

cat. no. 103 *Anthology of Ghazals*

Iran, dated A.H. Rajab 853 (A.D. July–August 1449)
104 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
21.2 x 7.7 cm (8 1/4 x 3 1/4 in.)
Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library, Ms. 127

Small, oblong anthologies of this type, attributable to Timurid ateliers from the early fifteenth century, typify poetry's central role in the cultural life of the dynasty. A ghazal (an Arabic derivative meaning "lovers' exchanges") was a lyric verse form practiced by a number of Timurid princes. Generally of five to twelve lines, with the final line often carrying the poet's *takhallus* (pen name), its customary theme is love, both mystical and human.¹¹¹ Its acknowledged masters were Sa'di and Hafiz, who are included in this anthology along with such contemporary Timurid poets as Qasim-i Anvar, Karibi, and Shahi, the latter two known as members of

Baysunghur's retinue.¹¹² The three folios exhibited are from the works of Khwaju Kirmani (f. 32b), Sa'di (f. 1a), and Aubadi (f. 42b) and demonstrate the wide range of forms and techniques of illumination practiced by the kitabkhana.

111. Reuben Levy, *An Introduction to Persian Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), pp. 13–15; Wheeler M. Thackston, "The *Daḥwān* of Khata'i: Pictures for the Poetry of Shāh Ismā'īl," *Asian Art* 1, no. 4 (Fall 1988), 43.

112. "Dawlatshah," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*, see Arberry et al., *Chester Beatty Library* 51–52, for the manuscript's complete contents.

cat. no. 104 *Design for a Margin*

Shiraz(?), c. 1430
Ink on paper
34.5 x 11.5 cm (13 3/4 x 4 1/2 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.51, #1

The collaborative nature of manuscript production is elucidated by this marginal design panel. Conceived as an independent component, a delicate chinoiserie world has been skillfully devised to inhabit the narrow boundaries of a page. Reminiscent of the marginalia common to Iskandar-Sultan's patronage at Shiraz, the sharp angle in this design may have been an accommodation for the triangular thumb panels that often grace the central edges of pages in books made for the prince.

cat. no. 105 *Design for the Corner of a Margin*

Iran, c. 1425–50
Ink on paper
27 x 20 cm (10 5/8 x 7 7/8 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.29, #1

With flowing rhythms and forms evocative of a floral arabesque, this running sequence of real and imaginary beasts, some in combat, was designed to tumble around the corner of a page. Pounded for transfer to another surface, scenes such as this were also popular for binding decoration (cat. no. 99).

cat. no. 106 *Panels of Vegetal Design*

Iran, c. 1400–1450
Ink on paper
16.5 x 24 cm (6 1/2 x 9 1/2 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.45, #4

Panels like these had multiple design applications in the Timurid kitabkhana. The examples shown here are variations on a vegetal theme, their arrangement on the page reminiscent of a pattern book. Serrated, split palmettes and blossoms of this type also appear in one of the few identifiable Timurid textiles fragments to survive (Hermitage 1175, fig. 80).

cat. no. 107 Ducks

Shiraz or Herat, c. 1400–1450
Ink and gold on paper
7.5 x 15.5 cm (3 x 6 1/8 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.43, #6

The fluid, calligraphic flourishes and swinging motion of this rapid sketch are typical of much of the contents of the Diez album and particularly of H.2152 in the Topkapı Sarayı Library. Models like these were the result of a process of continual repetition in the kitabkhana, reduced or enlarged depending on their intended purpose. A variety of animals in this technique are normally associated with decoration in manuscripts produced for Iskandar-Sultan at Shiraz, although similar motifs are found in works done for Shahrukh's son Ibrahim-Sultan in the same city and for Baysunghur at Herat.

cat. no. 108 Floral and Vegetal Fragment with Birds

Herat(?), c. 1430
Opaque watercolor and ink on paper
11.5 x 10 cm (4 1/2 x 3 7/8 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.S.77, #2

Showing evidence of pouncing, this fragment represents a type of decorative drawing first seen at Shiraz under Iskandar-Sultan and then at Herat in works executed for Baysunghur and his father, Shahrukh. Characterized by the use of pastel washes, the Herat variant seems to feature more robust forms and deeply saturated tones (see cat. no. 38, f. 141b).

cat. no. 109 Jug

Signed by Habibullah ibn Ali Baharjani
Herat(?), dated A.H. 861 (A.D. 1456–57)
Brass inlaid with silver
12.5 x 13 (diam.) cm (4 7/8 x 5 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatliche Museen Preussischer
Kulturbesitz, Museum für Islamische Kunst, L3606

This vessel is the earliest dated Timurid metal jug to survive, and there is only scattered evidence to indicate that such vessels were manufactured prior to the middle of the fifteenth century. Its form, while found in jade vessels of the type associated with Ulugh-Beg, has been sought in earlier Iranian metalwork¹¹⁵ and in Chinese porcelain jugs, the latter in theory "reintroducing" the form to eastern Iran via the trade exchanges of the fifteenth century.¹¹⁶ A dominant role in the decoration of these jugs is played by the inscriptional program. In addition to a royal protocol of the type associated with Timurid princes, one also occasionally finds a version of the "dove" poem.

To its owner felicity and well-being and life as long as a dove
cuckoo. Lasting might, with no humiliation in it, and auspicious
fate until Judgment Day.

115. Asadullah Sozen Melikion-Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World, 8th–18th Centuries* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1982), p. 216.

116. Komaroff, "The Timurid Phase," pp. 281–82.

117. *Ibid.*, pp. 414–16, cat. no. 1.

cat. no. 110 Jug

Made by Habibullah ibn Ali Baharjani
Herat(?), dated A.H. 866 (A.D. 1461–62)
Brass inlaid with silver
13 x 12.8 (diam.) cm (5 x 5 1/8 in.)
London, The Board of Trustees of the Victoria and
Albert Museum, 943–1886

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This is one of several mid-fifteenth-century jugs made by Habibullah ibn Ali Baharjani (see also cat. no. 109). The lengthy inscriptions that adorn the vessel include two ghazals from the *Diwan* of Hafiz written in naskh script. Both ghazals develop the theme of drinking and feasting and are clearly meant to evoke the jug's function. The first can be translated in part as:

At dawn vigilant fortune came to my couch
She said: stand up, for the sweet monarch has come
Drain the beaker and merrily to the spectacle come forward
That you may see in what garb your image of beauty has come¹¹⁸

The second:

What is sweeter than feasting in merry company and gardens in
the springtime?
Where is the cupbearer? Tell me, the object of your expectations,
what is it?
Every sweet moment that the hand bestows, regard it as
plunder¹¹⁷

118. Melikion-Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork*, p. 249.

117. *Ibid.*, p. 250.

cat. no. 111 Cenotaph of Taj al-Mulk wa'l-Din Abu'l-Qasim

Signed by Ustad Ahmad najjar and Ustad Hasan ibn
Husayn
Mazanderan, dated A.H. Ramadan 877
(A.D. February 1473)
Wood
113 x 117.8 x 186 cm (44 1/2 x 46 1/8 x 73 1/8 in.)
Providence, Rhode Island School of Design,
Museum of Art, Museum Appropriation, 18.728

A cenotaph was customarily placed in a funerary chamber, often adjacent to or part of a mosque or shrine. There it served as a memorial for the deceased, whose remains were laid elsewhere, often in a separate chamber below. Made for the shrine (*imamzada*) of Abu'l-Qasim in Mazanderan, this cenotaph was ordered by Gustaham, a ruler of the Baduspanid line, one of the various petty dynasties ruling in Mazanderan. These small ruling houses, isolated by the barrier of the Elburz mountains, maintained older artistic traditions, scripts, languages, and even religious beliefs that had disappeared elsewhere in Iran after the coming of Islam. The dense articulation of the surface with its juxtaposition of geometric,

vegetal, and inscriptional decoration reflects earlier woodcarving traditions,¹¹⁸ not the sophisticated elegance of the Timurid kitabkhana. The vertical panels on each face contain sayings of the Prophet Muhammad that call on Muslims to obey God and look to the next world, for "life is an hour."

118. Grube, "Notes on the Decorative Arts," p. 244, n. 115, for other examples.

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cat. no. 112 *Vegetal Design*

Iran, c. 1400–1450
Ink on paper
22.5 x 17 cm (8 7/8 x 6 3/4 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.5.68, #1

The strongly emphasized curves and modeled contours of this image suggest a deeply carved surface, such as wood or stone. While undoubtedly intended as a design for a variety of media, including textiles, a curious parallel is evident in the haft qalam tombstones found in Khurasan and Central Asia of the later fifteenth century, where forms exhibit similar sharp, lacelike edges.¹¹⁹

119. See fig. 71 and Colubbek, *The Timurid Shrine*, fig. 124.

cat. no. 113A–B *Tiles from a Building Inscription of Abu-Sa'id*

Iran, dated A.H. 860 (A.D. 1455)
Molded relief ceramic with luster-painted decoration

A 30 x 30 cm (11 3/4 x 11 3/4 in.)
London, The Board of Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum, C.26–1983

B 30.4 x 22 cm (12 x 8 3/4 in.)
New York, Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Theodore M. Davis Collection, bequest of Theodore M. Davis, 1915, 30.95.26

The luster technique of glazing involves a complex process whereby metallic pigments are fixed to the surface of a tile or vessel during a second, reduced firing. Its origins have been traced to Iraq or Egypt during the ninth century, and these remarkable tiles document the longevity of the technique in tilework in Iran into the fifteenth century. Abu-Sa'id (d. 1469) was not particularly famed as a patron of architecture, although buildings erected by his command or by those of his family members are known in both Khurasan and Transoxiana.¹²⁰ It is not known where or what kind of building was commemorated by these tiles, of which a number survive.¹²¹ With their flower-and-vase motif, the panels duplicate a theme found throughout earlier Timurid architecture, particularly at Samargand in the Shah-i Zinda complex. There are numerous instances of craftsmen identifying themselves on Timurid architectural projects,¹²² and a number of tiles from this series executed for Abu-Sa'id identify the calligrapher as Nusratuddin Muhammad.

120. CY Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan*, pp. 20, 241–43; Colubbek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 1:269–70, cat. no. 35.

121. Grube, "Notes on the Decorative Arts," p. 244, n. 44.

122. Colubbek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 1: Appendix 2.

cat. no. 114 *Design for a Cloud Collar*

Iran, c. 1450–1500
Color washes and ink on paper
12.1 x 45.4 cm (12 1/4 x 17 3/4 in.)
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Francis Bartlett
Donation of 1912 and Picture Fund, 14.542

The ruling martial ideology of the fifteenth-century Turco-Iranian world found its aesthetic equivalent in tales and depictions of battle. That preoccupation is reflected in this impressive composition, generally identified as a design for a cloud collar. As the Diez album drawings repeatedly demonstrate, designs and compositions executed in the kitabkhana were transferred to textiles by means of drawings like this. The considerable complexity and detail of this design raise the possibility that it was intended as an independent drawing executed within the collar format. The sources for the composition appear to be a variety of Chinese-inspired motifs, from which the artist has imaginatively quoted to form this pastiche. Its swirling currents, clashing diagonals, and rich detail of costume create a boisterous, almost fantastic effect, precisely the sort of exotica admired at both the Turcoman and Timurid courts.

cat. no. 115 *Cloud Collar Point with Fantastic Plant*

Iran, c. 1400–1450
Ink on paper
35.5 x 30 cm (14 x 11 3/4 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.5.56, #3

In typically Timurid symmetrical fashion, an array of shooting leaf forms and starlike blossoms burst like fireworks within the frame. Closely related to a more densely composed version by the same hand in the Diez album (cat. no. 90), this hybrid plant reflects the soft, intricate pyrotechnics the artists of the kitabkhana perfected in decorative drawing.

cat. no. 116 *Cloud Collar*

Iran, c. 1400–1450
Embroidered silk
184.5 x 95.0 cm (72 3/4 x 37 1/4 in.)
Moscow, Courtesy Treasury, State Kremlin,
TK-3117

One of the few survivors of a once rich and flourishing production, this exceedingly rare fragment offers a tantalizing hint of the visual potency of ornamental textiles in the Timurid aesthetic. From the standpoint of Timurid court ritual, the sumptuous impression of collars like this was both expected and contrived, as witnessed by their powerfully intoxicating effect in numerous paintings. Originally a collar ornament for a robe, its four points would have fallen at the chest, back, and shoulders, the vertical extensions that

line the opening of the robe ending in a border below the waist. The wearer's head would be seen as emerging from a verdant field ornamented with brilliant blue and gold chinoiserie foliage; fluttering amidst this paradisaical setting are pairs of angels with multicolored wings, familiar from a variety of Timurid media, while below a graceful, open arabesque of split palmettes undulates along the border. Long identified as belonging to the Safavid period, its formal elements and delicate aura are more in keeping with Timurid artistic aims.¹²¹

121. Pope and Ackerman, eds., *A Survey of Persian Art*, 5, pl. 1017. See also F. Spühler, "Carpets and Textiles," in *The Cambridge History of Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 6: 721.

cat. no. 117 *Textile Fragment*

Iran or Central Asia, c. 1450–1500
Satin lampas
93 x 48.3 cm (36 7/8 x 19 in.)
Washington D.C., The Textile Museum, acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1926, 3.53

At first sight the design of this fragment—an ogival lattice with bold medallions—evokes later sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Islamic textiles. Closer inspection, however, reveals that this somewhat damaged survival originally presented a more delicate, lyrical effect; a supplementary black weft, now largely missing, spun an intricate arabesque filigree over all areas of the piece that appear green.¹²⁴ That, together with the intricately balanced floral arabesque of the medallions, suggests a sensibility more Timurid than Safavid. A fragment of the same textile is also in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.73.5.653b).

124. Mary McWilliams, technical description in Carol Bier, ed., *Woven from the Soul: Spun from the Heart: Textile Arts of Safavid and Qajar Iran, 16th–19th Centuries*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: Textile Museum, 1987), p. 206, cat. no. 36.

cat. no. 118 *Design Panel*

Herat(?), fifteenth century
Opaque watercolor and ink on paper
11.5 x 11 cm (4 1/2 x 4 1/2 in.)
Berlin (West), Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Diez album
f. 73.5.70, #4

The decorative vocabulary that bound so much of Timurid artistic production together makes identification of the purpose of this design difficult. Its shape could have been used as a design component for a variety of purposes, ranging from illumination to domes and tent panels. By means of geometric progression and extrapolation commonly used in architectural design and construction, projects of enormous size could be derived from small working modules like this.¹²⁵

125. Golombek and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, p. 137, fig. 1.

cat. no. 119 *Carpet Fragment*

Iran or Central Asia, fifteenth century
30 x 65 cm (11 3/4 x 25 3/4 in.)
Athens, Benaki Museum, Inv. no. 16147

This small fragment with its repeating knotted pattern over a monochrome field is strongly reminiscent of the geometric carpets frequently seen in Timurid painting. Apparently no longer favored in court circles during the succeeding Safavid period in Iran, geometric carpets were a mainstay of Timurid court paraphernalia, whether in palaces or in gardens. Judging from surviving representations in manuscript illustration, this piece formed an edge of the inner field, the missing borders beyond the guard bands presumably filled with a conventional pattern based on kufic script.¹²⁶

126. Amy Briggs, "Timurid Carpets," *Art Islamica* 7 (1940): figs. 40–41.

cat. no. 120 *Elliptical Cup*

Iran or Central Asia, fifteenth century
Jade (nephrite)
15.9 x 16.5 cm (6 1/4 x 6 1/2 in.)
San Francisco, Asian Art Museum, the Avery Brundage Collection, B60 J160

The carving of jade vessels under Timurid patronage embraced a surprisingly wide range of forms. This elliptical cup is part of a group of jade cups with clear affinities to metal forms.¹²⁷ Less finely carved than known examples with princely inscriptions, its sharp edges, angular form, and schematic carving nonetheless convey a forceful presence and suggest a metal prototype.

127. Robert Skelton, "The Relations between the Chinese and Indian Jade Carving Traditions," in *The Westward Influence of the Chinese Arts*, ed. William Watson, *Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia*, no. 1 (London: University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, Percival David Foundation, 1972), p. 101, n. 18.

cat. no. 121 *Saber with Dragon-Headed Hilt and Scabbard*

Iran or Central Asia, fifteenth century
Watered steel and white jade (nephrite) inlaid with gold
77.5 x 10.5 cm (30 1/2 x 4 1/4 in.)
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Armory, 1–220

There can be little doubt that this magnificent saber was once the possession of a Timurid prince. Extant Timurid arms of this quality are exceedingly few in number, and none can match this one—a formidable combination of power, grace, and luxurious materials—for sheer visual impact. The perfection of the watered-steel blade in conjunction with the white jade hilt, crowned with rampant dragon heads and studded with gold inlay, has created in this instrument of war a potent symbol of Timurid military might.¹²⁸

128. A superb dagger dated A.H. 902 (A.D. 1496–97) in the Wallace Collection, London, also features a white jade hilt, while one side of its blade carries decoration similar to that on the fittings of the Topkapı scabbard; see Asadullah Sores Mektan-Chirvan, "Four Pieces of Islamic Metalwork: Some Notes on a Previously Unknown School," *Art and Archaeology Research Papers*, December 1976, pp. 24–25.

- cat. no. 122 *Dragon-Headed Candlestick*
Iran or Central Asia, fifteenth century
Brass engraved
25.1 x 16.9 (diam.) cm (9 7/8 x 6 3/4 in.)
Copenhagen, The David Collection, 38/1982

A number of Timurid candelabra with tapered bases feature sockets in the form of open-mouthed, double-headed dragons whose twisting bodies form the shafts of the sockets. While the significance of this powerful motif is unknown, a possible astrological meaning may be reflected in the theme of entwined dragons. In the view of Muslim astrologers, the pseudo-planetary nodes of the moon's orbit were regarded as the head and tail of a giant serpent or dragon (the Arabic *al-jawzahr*) that affected solar and lunar eclipses. The motif of entwined dragons was apparently used in some instances to signify such an event.¹¹⁰ The conjunction of the theme with candle flames would serve to enhance such an allusion. A representation of a candlestick of this type can be found in a *Khamisa* of Nizami dated A.H. 900 (A.D. 1495) (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Pers. Ms. 5835, no. 830, f. 152a).

110. G. Azarpay, "The Eclipse Dragon on an Arabic Manuscript Miniature," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 98, no. 4 (1978): 583–74.

- cat. no. 123 *Plaque*
Iran or Central Asia, fifteenth century
Jade (nephrite)
Diameter: 7.5 cm (3 in.)
Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library, no. 29

This jade decorative plaque is unusual in both shape and technique. Its openwork central field of chinoiserie blossoms, much of it apparently the result of drilling, is rare for the Timurid period. While the plaque's function remains unknown, its decoration is accompanied in the customary manner by Persian verses consisting of benedictory wishes:

May the world be as you desire,
And may the celestial sphere smile upon you.
May the world creator protect you.
May your every endeavor turn out as you wish.
May God preserve you.¹¹¹

111. Trata Wheeler Thackston

- cat. no. 124 *Cup*
Inscribed with the name of Ulugh Beg Kurāghān
Central Asia(?), c. 1420–49
Jade (nephrite)
6.4 x 39.4 cm (2 1/2 x 15 3/4 in.)
London, The Trustees of the British Museum,
OA 1959.11–20.1 (36)

The much-debated origins of this cup stem from Ulugh-Beg's known passion for jade, his proximity to its source in Central Asia, and Samarqand's location on the major trade route to China. Recent Chinese jade scholarship, while claiming Chinese manufacture, has merely confirmed the cup's form as that of a *cheng* (water

reservoir).¹¹² There is no reason at present, however, to reject the suggestion, made when the cup was first published, that it was possibly made at a provincial Central Asian jade-carving center in imitation of a Chinese example.¹¹³ The vessel's rather crudely carved handle seems to preclude the possibility that this was an "imperial" gift, of which the prince was a frequent recipient. It is interesting to note that the flattened, splayed leonine head (actually a *chi*, or hornless dragon) is copied as a fountain spout in a late fifteenth-century Herat illustration.¹¹⁴

112. Teng Shu-ping, "Jades Believed to Have Been Bestowed and Transmitted to Foreign Lands" (in Chinese), *National Palace Museum Monthly of Chinese Art* no. 47 (February 1981): 5–11.

113. Ralph Pinder Wilson and William Watson, "An Inscribed Jade Cup from Samarqand," *British Museum Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (1960): 21.

114. E. B. Martin and Sir Thomas Arnold, *The Nizami Ma. Written in 1495 for Sultan Ali Mirza Barlas, Ruler of Samarqand, in the British Museum* (Lh. 6830, Vienna: privately printed, 1926), pl. 21.

- cat. no. 125 *Jug*
China, Ming dynasty, Xuande period (1426–35)
Underglaze-painted ceramic
Height: 14 cm (5 1/2 in.)
London, The Trustees of the British Museum,
OA 1930.4–3.1 (57)

An influx of Muslim merchants made the principal metalwork shapes of the Islamic world available to Yuan and Ming China. Of these a number were directly copied for or modified traditional Chinese porcelain shapes.¹¹⁵ This blue-and-white jug from the first half of the fifteenth century closely follows a Timurid metal or jade form, now known primarily from the second half of the century (cat. no. 120). It seems likely, however, that Timurid jugs of this shape provided the prototype for similar Chinese objects. The shape is found in the white jade jug made for Ulugh-Beg (fig. 46), datable to the first half of the fifteenth century, blue-and-white ceramic jugs of this shape are also found in late Timurid painting (see cat. no. 137, f. 552). Although these painted representations could be Iranian (a number of Iranian examples survive that are datable to the fifteenth century), the relative crudity of those wares tends to discount any use as court ware.¹¹⁶

114. Basil Gray, "The Influence of Near Eastern Metalwork on Chinese Ceramics," in *Studies in Chinese and Islamic Art* (London: Pindar Press, 1987) 2: 1–14.

115. For examples see Margaret Medley, "Chinese Porcelain in the Istanbul Album Paintings," in *Between Iran and China*, p. 119, n. 1.

- cat. no. 126 *Jug*
Iran or Central Asia, fifteenth century
Jade (nephrite)
10 x 9.6 (diam.) cm (3 7/8 x 3 3/4 in.)
London, The Trustees of the British Museum,
1945–10 17 257

The Mughal emperor of India Jahangir was an avid collector of objects made for his Timurid ancestors. The powerful, massive form of this dark green jug appealed to his taste in hardstones. A nasta'liq inscription added around the neck of the jug dates its

acquisition by Jahangir to the fourteenth year of his reign, 1619, at Fatehpur Sikri, the former imperial capital. Also included are Persian verses whose imagery reflects some of the numerous poetic allusions wine drinking and its paraphernalia evoked in royal circles: "This cup of jade, choice gem, is [the cup] of Jahangir Shah, son of Shah Akbar. Let the water of life be in his cup, so that it may be the water of Khizr, life prolonging."¹³⁶

136. Edward Thomas, "Note on a Jade Drinking Vessel of the Emperor Jahangir," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 7, no. 2 (1875): 188.

cat. no. 127 Seal

Made for Miran Shah ibn Timur
Iran, before 1408
Chrysolite
1.8 x 2.1 cm (¾ x ⅝ in.)
Leningrad, Courtesy State Hermitage, SA-8481

This seal set into a ring appears to be the sole surviving object that can be linked to Miran Shah (d. 1408), the much-maligned third son of Timur. This prince performed valiantly in his father's campaigns in Central Asia, Afghanistan, Iran, the Caucasus, southern Russia, Iraq, and Anatolia. With the death of Umar-Shaykh in 1394, he became the most senior of Timur's offspring, but perhaps because of his mother's inferior social status (she was a concubine and the daughter of a domestic slave), he was passed over as designated successor in favor of his stepson Muhammad-Sultan, the son of Jahangir, who was Timur's only son born of a legal wife to reach adulthood. Later Timurid chronicles portray Miran Shah as mentally imbalanced from a fall while hunting in 1397 and offer as evidence numerous instances of his increasingly erratic behavior, including abrogation of Timur's ordinances and the senseless destruction of buildings in Tabriz and Sulṭaniyya. Timur himself intervened in 1399 to settle affairs in Azerbaijan, where Miran Shah governed. There is reason, however, to doubt this official view of his derangement. It has recently been suggested that Miran Shah's actions were in reality acts of political dissent brought about by what the prince considered continual affronts to his legitimate rights. According to this view, his rebellion would consequently have been portrayed as insanity in chronicles written at Timurid courts hostile to the family of Miran Shah.¹³⁷

137. John E. Woods, "Turco-Iranica II: Notes on a Timurid Decree of 1394/798," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 41, no. 4 (October 1984): 331-35.

cat. no. 128 Seal

Made for Gawharshad bint Ghiyathuddin Tarkhan Herat(?), before 1457
Jade (nephrite)
2.7 x 2.1 cm (1 x ⅝ in.)
Leningrad, Courtesy State Hermitage, SA-13650

This dark green, almond-shaped seal represents the sole extant object made for Gawharshad, the powerful wife of Shahrukh and mother of Ulugh-Beg, Baysunghur, and Muhammad-Juki. Her father, Ghiyathuddin Tarkhan, was an important Chaghatay noble, whose ancestor Qishliq had once saved the life of Chingiz Khan.¹³⁸ In light of her influential role in Timurid court life and politics,

Gawharshad's seal undoubtedly carried significant power. The seal is typical of Timurid work in its technical mastery and detailed control of hardstone carving.¹³⁹

138. V. V. Barthold, *Ulugh-Beg*, vol. 2 of *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, trans. V. and T. Minorsky (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1938), p. 43.

139. For a full discussion of this piece, see A. Ivanov, "The Seal of Gawhar Shad" (in Russian), in *Countries and Peoples of the East* (Moscow, 1973), 18: 199-201.

cat. no. 129

Bowl

Iran or Central Asia, c. 1450-1500
Jade (nephrite)
6.5 x 14.5 cm (2 ½ x 5 ¾ in.)
Paris, Musée du Louvre, Section Islamique, MR199

This exquisitely shaped bowl is perhaps the most graceful manifestation of the kitabkhana's influence on jade carving. Its shape resembles that of numerous ceramic vessels produced in Iran during this period, and its decoration of lotus blossoms and fan-shaped leaves that soar around the bowl's surfaces finds numerous parallels in Timurid decorative drawing and design.¹⁴⁰ The Persian inscriptions of poetic verse beneath the gently flaring rim are in the same quatrefoil-and-cartouche scheme seen in the agate wine cup made for Sultan-Husayn Mirza (cat. no. 130).

140. Grube, "Notes on the Decorative Arts," p. 255, figs. 123-24.

cat. no. 130

Bowl

Iran or Central Asia, fifteenth century
Underglaze-painted ceramic
Diameter: 31 cm (12 ¼ in.)
Kuwait, al-Homaizi

The differences often found between Chinese prototypes and even the best Iranian ceramics during the fifteenth century are typified by this superb blue-and-white example. Its boldly stated forms and vigorous execution replace the elegant, flowing design of its Chinese model. While lacking the usual precision and grace that were the hallmarks of the Timurid kitabkhana, the bowl's decoration nonetheless suggests a familiarity with the themes and motifs disseminated through that institution. The actual process by which these designs were made available to potters remains unclear, but the composition stands as an inventive, schematic reworking of those seen on mid-fourteenth century Chinese blue-and-white dishes.¹⁴¹

141. Krabl, "Porcelain," p. 491, cat. nos. 556-57.

cat. no. 131

Bowl

Iran or Central Asia, fifteenth century
Underglaze-painted ceramic
7.6 x 14.6 cm (3 x 5 ¾ in.)
New York, Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of V. Everett Macy, 1932, 32.33

The group of ceramic bowls to which this example belongs is small in number and of relatively poor quality compared with the Chinese porcelains that were undoubtedly their prototype. Local wares

have been excavated in various parts of Iran and Soviet Central Asia, and there are indications that Kirman was at one time a production center.¹⁴² Dragons, a popular decorative device that appears in a wide variety of media during the Timurid period, are found in great numbers in the Topkapı album H.2152, many in this very configuration. The source of the motif could also have been actual Chinese ceramic examples, early fifteenth-century Ming blue-and-white bowls bearing the same running, three-clawed dragon are known.¹⁴³

142. Grube, "Notes on the Decorative Arts," pp. 238–40.

143. Kroll, "Porcelain," p. 515, cat. no. 809.

cat. no. 132 *Bowl*

China, Ming dynasty, Xuande period (1426–35)
Underglaze-painted ceramic
10.2 x 23 cm (4 x 9 1/4 in.)
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Ernest
Larson Black Memorial Fund, 53.41.3

Likely produced at the famed Jingdezhen kilns, this Ming bowl, decorated in cobalt blue, epitomizes the type of ceramic ware admired at the Timurid court. The interior decoration features seven guavas or lichees enclosed by a flowering vine, featuring three pairs of chrysanthemum and lotus, and a wave-patterned rim. A bold design of lotus leaves on the exterior is common to Ming wares, although their separation and length appears to be an early fifteenth-century feature. Three very similar examples are known in the Ardabil collection, which may include prized pieces formerly in Timurid possession.¹⁴⁴

144. John Alexander Pope, *Chinese Porcelains from the Ardabil Shrine* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art, 1966), pl. 47.

cat. no. 133 *Demon in Chains*

Iran or Central Asia, fifteenth century
Opaque watercolor and gold on paper
25.4 x 33.7 cm (10 x 13 1/4 in.)
The Cleveland Museum of Art, purchase from the
J. H. Wade Fund, 82.63

This work forms part of a highly controversial series of paintings now almost entirely in albums in the Topkapı Sarayı Library in Istanbul. The paintings represent a problem of enormous dimension for historians of Islamic painting, and for more than fifty years there has been little or no agreement over their time and place of production. Their peculiar stylistic qualities and unusual subject matter are unlike anything produced in the established ateliers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Various identified as minstrels, dervishes, nomads, shamans, and demons, they are generally characterized by dark, heavily applied pigments, faces and garments distinguished by emphatically rendered folds and lines, and an empty, unspecified locale. The paintings are also frequently inscribed with the name Muhammad Siyah-Qalam. While no longer all thought to be the work of this still-identified painter, their common features suggest the work of an archer. The Cleveland example shows a theme—the captivity and bondage of demons—shared by many of these paintings. It is interesting to note that the

demon being led away in chains sports the cervine horns of wild animals as opposed to the domesticated bovine horns found on other demons.¹⁴⁵

145. Yasmin Qashqari, personal correspondence, February 1988.

cat. no. 134 *War Mask*

Iran, c. 1450–1500
Steel
20 x 16.5 cm (7 7/8 x 6 1/2 in.)
Hashem Khosrovan Collection, T/1 303

This mask is both frightening and strangely compelling. Its visual effect is clearly meant to reinforce the terror of engaging a Turkic-Mongol warrior in battle. Although one of only three such fifteenth-century examples known to survive (the other two are in the State Armory at the Kremlin), contemporary paintings attest to the widespread use of these daunting implements of war.¹⁴⁶ The hinge on the brow of the mask was used to attach it to a helmet, while the holes on its sides allowed protective coverings to be secured. The exuberant arabesques engraved on the face are similar to Turcoman illumination and suggest a possible western Iranian origin for this remarkable object.

146. David Alexander and Howard Ricketts, in Falk, ed., *Treasures of Islam*, p. 204.

cat. no. 135 *Assault on a Castle*

From a lost manuscript, inscribed to Bihzad
Iran, c. 1500
Opaque watercolor and gold on paper
41 x 29.2 cm (16 1/8 x 11 1/2 in.)
Cambridge, Harvard University Art Museums
(Arthur M. Sackler Museum), bequest of the estate
of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, 1960.199

Although this striking image of a siege is inscribed to the renowned Timurid painter Bihzad, it is more likely that it was painted by one of his close followers.¹⁴⁷ Charged with dramatic energy and a preoccupation with the gruesome physical aspects of war, this work finds its closest parallels in the detailed and lively battle scenes contained in the *Zafarnama* of 1467–68 (cat. no. 147, f. 282b–283a). Despite the painting's engaging qualities it is composed, at least in part, of stock images and details such as the genre scene in the upper left-hand corner. Since the painting was left unfinished and there is no text on the reverse, it is impossible to identify either the specific subject or the manuscript it was intended to illustrate.

147. Simpson, *Arabic and Persian Painting*, p. 48.

cat. no. 136 *Sultan Husayn Mirza*

Attributed to Bihzad
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1500–1525
Ink and gold on paper
34.3 x 32.7 cm (13 3/8 x 12 7/8 in.)
Cambridge, Harvard University Art Museums
(Arthur M. Sackler Museum), gift of John Golet,
1958.99

The inscriptions on either side of this arresting drawing identify the sitter as Sultan-Husayn and the artist as Bihzad. While it is unlikely that the drawing is actually by Bihzad,¹⁴⁸ there seems little doubt that it depicts Sultan-Husayn. Admired throughout the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in the eastern Muslim world for his refined and artistically active court, Sultan-Husayn was perceived as a model by any ruler seeking to emulate Timurid cultural prowess. Portraits of the king would have circulated among the princes of the dynasty, and both the originals as well as copies would have been available to Timurid rivals and conquerors alike.

148. Simpson, *Arabic and Persian Painting*, p. 76.

cat. no. 137 *Battle between Zanga and Awkhasht*

From a partially dispersed *Shahnama* of Firdawsi copied by Salik ibn Sa'ad for Sultan-Ali Mirza Gilan, dated A.H. 899 (A.D. 1493–94)
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
34.6 x 24.4 cm (13 5/8 x 9 5/8 in.)
Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, purchase made possible by Smithsonian unrestricted trust fund, Smithsonian Collections Acquisition Program, and Dr. Arthur M. Sackler, S86.0176

This striking image is from a copy of the *Shahnama* often called the "Big Head" *Shahnama* after the large size of many of the figures' heads. The manuscript is now divided into two volumes: the first, in the Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, contains 202 paintings; the second, in the Istanbul University Library, 109 paintings. The paintings can be divided into two groups: those that are executed in a manner closely following earlier Timurid models with their seamless compositions and balanced forms and others, like the "Battle between Zanga and Awkhasht" with its large figures, simplified composition, exaggerated forms, and intense colors, which reflect a dramatic departure from the standard conventions of fifteenth-century painting established under Timurid patronage.

cat. no. 138 *Makhzan al-asrar of Mir Haydar Khwarazmi Turkiguy*

Copied by Sultan-Ali al-Yaqubi for Ya'qub ibn Uzun Hasan Aqqoyunlu
Tabriz, dated A.H. 25 Jumada 883 (A.D. 24 August 1478)
32 folios with 1 illustration
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
18.1 x 11.1 cm (7 1/8 x 4 3/8 in.)
The New York Public Library, Spencer Collection, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations, Persian MS. 41

Composed by Iskandar-Sultan's court poet and written in Turki, the *Makhzan al-asrar* of Mir Haydar is loosely based on Nizami's celebrated poem of the same name. This copy was made by Sultan-Ali al-Yaqubi for the Aqqoyunlu ruler Ya'qub ibn Uzun Hasan in 1478, the year he acceded to power; it is typical of the finest Turcoman work. The bold, almost hallucinatory illumination that punctuates

the opening folios (1b–3a) is based on mid-fifteenth-century Timurid formulae, but the unusual pastel tones and dynamic lines of this double-page frontispiece distinguish it from earlier models. The highly burnished, light blue, gold-flecked paper with Chinese-inspired drawings that the manuscript is written on also recalls earlier Timurid work, especially such texts as the two volumes of Attar's poetry (see cat. nos. 39, 40).

cat. no. 139 *Diwan of Qasim*

Copied by Shaykh Mahmud Pir-Budaqi for Pir-Budaq Qaraqoyunlu
Iran, dated A.H. 863 (A.D. 1458–59)
232 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
25.6 x 17 cm (10 1/8 x 6 3/4 in.)
Istanbul, Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, 1986

Pir-Budaq accompanied his father, Jahanshah Qaraqoyunlu, during his brief occupation of Herat in 1458 but rebelled against him less than a decade later. Overthrown and murdered, perhaps by one of his brothers in 1466,¹⁴⁹ Pir-Budaq was nevertheless a skilled warrior and active patron of the arts. It is tempting to associate the production of this copy of the *Diwan* of Qasim with the Timurid artists captured by Pir-Budaq during the raid on Herat. The extraordinary binding with its lively doublures and illuminated frontispiece (the right-hand half of which is missing) are remarkable for their clever manipulation of Timurid forms and conventions. By intensifying the pigments and using more open patterns, for instance, the frontispiece has been given a vibrancy that has no counterpart in Timurid work, an effect that is reinforced by an incredibly precise line and the stippling of gold.

149. H. R. Roemer, "The Türkmen Dynasties," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, 6: 164.

cat. no. 140 *Khamsa of Nizami*

Copied for Amir Ali Farsi Barlas
Herat(?), dated A.H. 900 (A.D. 1494–95)
203 folios with 22 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
25 x 17 cm (9 7/8 x 6 3/4 in.)
London, The British Library, Or.6810

Although the manuscript lacks an informative colophon, one of its paintings contains an inscription identifying its patron as Amir Ali Farsi Barlas (f. 62b), and another is dated A.H. 900. Numerous paintings in the manuscript are inscribed to Bihzad, Qasim ibn Ali, Mirak, and Abdul-Razzaq, but the accuracy of these attributions is questionable. Some, for instance, contain inscriptions to more than one artist (f. 106b, for instance, has marginal and intercolumnar notations to Mirak, Bihzad, and Qasim Ali). Three of the paintings in the manuscript, including "Iskandar Visiting the Hermit" (f. 273a), portray the great warrior in the guise of a contemporary Timurid ruler (presumably Sultan-Husayn). While this undoubtedly reflects late fifteenth-century interests in holy men, it may also be an allusion to Hatifi's *Timurnama* (History of Timur), which casts Timur—and by extension his descendants—in the guise of the leg

endary Iskandar. The manuscript was in India by the beginning of the seventeenth century. A long note written by Jahangir, dated A.H. 1014 (A.D. 1605), appears on f. 2a; another, dated A.H. 1037 (A.D. 1628), indicates that the book also entered the library of his son Shahjahan.

cat. no. 141 *Koran*
Copied by Muhammad Mu'min ibn Abdullah Mawarid for Abu-Sa'id
Iran, dated A.H. 845 (A.D. 1442)
310 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
34.5 x 23 cm (13 5/8 x 9 in.)
St. Andrews, Lent by the University Library, 29

Copied for Timur's great-grandson Abu-Sa'id, this Koran is one of the few objects that can be securely attributed to his patronage. The elegant rayhani script and extraordinarily precise illumination are typical of mid-fifteenth-century Timurid work at Herat.

cat. no. 142 *Ring*
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1450–1500
Jade (nephrite) and gold
3.5 x 2.5 (diam.) cm (1 3/8 x 1 in.)
New York, Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1912, 12.224.6

Supported by two dragon heads that resemble the dragon handles on numerous Timurid jade and metal vessels, the nephrite signet contains an Arabic prayer to Ali: "Call Ali, the revealer of miracles. You will find him a comfort to you in a crisis. Every care and every sorrow will pass through your companionship. Ali, Ali, Ali."¹⁵⁰ A second inscription, written in Persian around the bezel of the ring, reads, "O my Lord! Instead of writing Thy name, I say the following sentence. O my soul! In consequence of my love Thy image is everywhere with me. O my soul! Be as wise in thy conversation as Solomon. My world and heaven are in this ring."¹⁵¹ Although it has recently been argued that the Shiite allusions to Ali in the first of the ring's inscriptions indicates an early Safavid origin for the piece,¹⁵² there is little reason to doubt that it was made during the Timurid period. With the increased interest in mysticism and blurring of distinctions between Sunni and Shiite Islam during the second half of the fifteenth century, numerous references to Ali and other Shiite martyrs occur in the epigraphy of the Timurids and are typical of Timurid dynastic views of religious expediency.

150. Linda Komaroff, "Timurid to Safavid Iran: Continuity and Change," *Musées* 10 (1979–80): 15.

151. Trans. Wheeler Thackston.

152. Komaroff, "Timurid to Safavid Iran," p. 14.

cat. no. 143 *Calligraphic Panel*
Iran, c. 1500
Tile mosaic
91.5 x 145 cm (36 x 57 1/4 in.)
Copenhagen, The David Collection, 16/1972

Assembled from individually cut pieces of tile, this panel is typical of late fifteenth-century architectural decoration. Inscribed in the center of the panel is the well-known saying: "The Prophet (peace upon him and his family) said: 'I am the city of knowledge, and Ali is the gate. You are to me as Aaron was to Moses.'" A second inscription, a prayer in honor of the twelve Shiite imams, surrounds the first: "O God, pray for Muhammad Mustafa and Ali Murtada and Hasan al-Radi and Husayn, the martyr of Kerbala, and for Zayn al-Abidin and Muhammad al-Baqir and Ja'far al-Sadiq and Musa al-Kazim and Ali al-Rida and Muhammad al-Taqi and Ali al-Naqi and Hasan al-Askari and Muhammad al-Mahdi. God's prayers and salutations upon them all."

cat. no. 144A–B *Two Architectural Fragments*

From the Shrine of Zayn al-Mulk
Isfahan, dated A.H. 885 (A.D. 1480–81)
Tile mosaic

A Large vertical panel
163.8 x 83.8 cm (64 5/8 x 33 in.)
Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, from the Arthur M. Sackler Collections (lent by the estate of Arthur M. Sackler), MLS2025

B Narrow vertical panel
85.2 x 32.1 cm (33 3/8 x 12 5/8 in.)
The Brooklyn Museum, gift of Mrs. Evelyn Metzger, 77–196–3

These panels and other fragments now in European and North American collections are from the Shrine of Zayn al-Mulk in Isfahan, built by Ja'far ibn Imad ibn Ali al-Adhami al-Gulbari al-Hasani in 1480–81,¹⁵³ during the Aqqoyunlu occupation of the city. Despite the Aqqoyunlu presence, the design and coloring of the panels are characteristic of late fifteenth-century Timurid work. Composed of densely arranged floral, geometric, and vegetal designs in aubergine, turquoise, white, yellow ocher, and deep blue, the panels were originally part of an extremely elaborate architectural ensemble.

153. Colombeck and Wilber, *Timurid Architecture*, 1: 386–87.

cat. no. 145 *Khamisa of Nizami*
Herat(?), dated A.H. 846 (A.D. 1442)
316 folios with 19 paintings
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
19 x 12 cm (7 1/2 x 4 3/4 in.)
London, The British Library, Add.25900

Of the nineteen paintings in this manuscript only one is contemporary with its date of completion. Fourteen others can be attributed to the late fifteenth century, while four are of Safavid origin and can be dated to the 1530s.¹⁵⁴ One of the fourteen late Timurid paintings (f. 77b) contains an inscription dated A.H. Rajab 898 (A.D. April 1492), suggesting an approximate date for the remainder of the group. Bihzad's name appears on three of the illustrated folios, including "Bahram Gur and the Dragon" (f. 161a). Another (f. 114a),

though unsigned, is generally accepted as Bihzad's as well.¹⁵⁵ An almost identical painting of "Bahram Gur and the Dragon" appears in the *Khamsa* of Nizami copied for Amir Ali Farsi Barlas (cat. no. 140, f. 157a) dated 1494–95.

154. Titley, *Miniatures from Persian Manuscripts*, p. 137.

155. Richard Ettinghausen, "Bihzad," in *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (London: E. J. Brill, 1960), 1: 1213.

cat. no. 146 *Bustan of Sa'di*

Copied by Sultan-Ali al-Katib for Sultan-Husayn Mirza
Herat, dated A.H. Rajab 893 (A.D. June 1488)
54 folios with 5 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
30.5 x 23.5 cm (12 x 9 1/2 in.)
Cairo, General Egyptian Book Organization, Adab Farsi 908

Few objects produced at the end of the fifteenth century so succinctly embody the refined spirit of Sultan-Husayn's court as this manuscript. Copied in a flowing nasta'liq script by the renowned calligrapher Sultan-Ali al-Katib and punctuated by two brilliant double-page illuminations, this is a truly luxurious work of art. In addition to the manuscript's powerful appeal, its importance lies in the authenticity of the four paintings that bear Bihzad's name: the double-page frontispiece of a feast, "King Dara and the Herdsman," "An Old Man Refused Admittance to a Mosque," and "The Seduction of Yusuf." These are among the few images that can be unquestionably accepted as the work of the artist.¹⁵⁶

156. See, for example, Ettinghausen, "Bihzad," p. 1212.

cat. no. 147 *Zafarnama of Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi*

Copied by Sher Ali for Sultan-Husayn Mirza
Herat(?), dated A.H. 872 (A.D. 1467–68)
539 folios with 6 double-page illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
23.5 x 15.2 cm (9 1/4 x 6 in.)
Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University, Milton S. Eisenhower Library, John Work Garrett Collection

Although numerous copies of the *Zafarnama* were commissioned during the fifteenth century, this is the only late fifteenth-century illustrated copy made for a member of the Timurid ruling elite known to have survived. Completed on the eve of Sultan-Husayn's capture of Herat, the manuscript's six double-page illustrations (ff. 82b–83a, 115b–116a, 174b–175a, 282b–283a, 359b–360a, 449b–450a) were probably added around 1480. They are remarkable for their daring compositions, boldly rendered figures, and rich palette of greens, browns, reds, and oranges. Although none of the paintings is signed, it has been argued that they are attributable to an early moment in the career of Bihzad.¹⁵⁷ With its elegant nasta'liq script, finely burnished paper, and dramatic images, this *Zafarnama* can be seen both as a celebration of Timur's conquests and as a symbol of the dynasty's power. That it held a forceful message for later Timurid rulers is attested by several inscriptions on the flyleaf

documenting its ownership by the Mughal emperors Akbar, Jahangir, and Shahjahan.¹⁵⁸

157. Eleanor Sims, "The Garrett Manuscript of the Zafar-Nama: A Study in Fifteenth-Century Timurid Patronage," Ph.D. diss. (Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1973), pp. 367–75.

158. For a more detailed discussion of the Mughals' interest in this copy of the *Zafarnama*, see Michael Brand and Glenn Lowry, *Akbar's India: Art from the Mughal City of Victory*, cat. cat. (New York: Asia Society Galleries, 1985), pp. 91, 150–51.

cat. no. 148 *Diwan of Sultan-Husayn Mirza*

Herat(?), c. 1490
29 folios
Opaque watercolor, gold, and decoupage on
gold-flecked colored paper
24 x 15.8 cm (9 1/2 x 6 1/4 in.)
Istanbul, Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, 1916

Using the *nom de plume* Husayni, Sultan-Husayn wrote numerous poems in Turkish, mostly in the form of ghazals. Copied in *qit'a*, each of the elegantly shaped nasta'liq letters of the text has been carefully cut from colored sheets of paper and pasted onto the pages of the manuscript. Small, precisely drawn panels of illumination mark the beginning of new poems and further embellish the multicolored, gold-flecked pages. The manuscript, which has yet to be systematically studied, is incomplete as numerous pages from the text are now dispersed (see cat. no. 149). At least two other late fifteenth-century copies of Sultan-Husayn's *Diwan* survive: one in the Bibliothèque Nationale (Suppl. Turc. 993) copied by Sultan-Ali Mashhadi in 1485; the other, in the Topkapı Sarayı Library (E.H. 1636) dated A.H. 897 (A.D. 1492).

cat. no. 149 *Folio of poetry*

From a partially dispersed *Diwan* of Sultan-Husayn Mirza
Herat(?), c. 1490
Opaque watercolor, gold, and decoupage on
gold-flecked colored paper
22.5 x 14.6 cm (8 7/8 x 5 3/4 in.)
Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Nashi M. Heeramanek Collection, gift of Joan Palevsky, M.73.5.599

Inscribed in the illuminated cartouche at the top of the page is the phrase, "Also by him [may God make his rule eternal]." The couplets that follow are from a ghazal written in Turkish.

Thank God that my eyes are brightened by your beauty.
The hut of union with you is an abode for my wounded heart.
If, in my separation from you, sparks shot from my fiery sights,
Today from those very sparks the candle of my good fortune
is lit.
If before my pearl-raining eye was a jewel casket,
By the reflection of the jewel of your beauty today it is a treasury.
Why, like the rose, do [you] not blossom in the banquet of
revelry?

For today the candle that lights my assembly is that silvery-bodied cypress.

Although Sulṭān-Husayn's *Diwan* contains numerous poems, the ruler is not usually considered a particularly inspired poet. Babur, for instance, comments, "He had a leaning towards poetry and even put a *diwan* together, writing in Turki with [Husayn] for his pen name. Many couplets in his *diwan* are not bad; it is however written in the same metre throughout."¹⁵⁹

160 Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, *Baburnama*, trans. Annette Susanah Beveridge (London: Luzak & Co., 1971), p. 239.

cat. no. 150 Wine Cup

Made for Sulṭān-Husayn Mirza
Herat, dated A.H. 874 (A.D. 1470–71)
Striped agate
Height: 5.5 cm (2 1/8 in.)
A. Soudavar Collection

In the complicated etiquette of the late Timurid court, the consumption of wine and other libations played an important role. Babur, in fact, makes note of the numerous drinking parties he attended during his brief stay in Herat in 1506 (see pp. 108–9).

Although a number of hardstone vessels survive from the first half of the fifteenth century, especially the jade pieces associated with Ulugh-Beg, this is one of the few surviving from the second half of the century. The inscription on the side and rim clearly indicate its function:

This cup, which gives good news of rose-colored wine, is more than a thousand of Jamshid's goblets. When it is filled with rosey wine, you would say it is a cloud lit by the brilliance of the sun.

This cup, which you can see pouring draughts like a cloud, is a sea with whirlpools on every side. No, no, since it is constantly full of agate wine, it is a mountain that is a mine of molten rubies.¹⁶⁰

160. Trans. Wheeler Thackston.

cat. no. 151 Jug

Made by Muhammad ibn Shamsuddin al-Ghuri for
Sulṭān-Husayn Mirza
Herat(?), dated A.H. middle of Sha'ban 901 (A.D. 11
April 1498)
Brass inlaid with gold and silver
Height: 14.2 cm (5 5/8 in.)
London, The Trustees of the British Museum,
1962.7 18.1

This jug is one of many virtually identical vessels made during the second half of the fifteenth century. It is missing its handle, which would have been in the form of a dragon like that of cat. no. 110. According to its principal inscription, the jug was made for Sulṭān Husayn: "The most mighty Sultan, the glorified Khaqan, the master of the kings of the Arabs and the non-Arabs, he that is supported by the beneficent king [God] the Sultan, son of the Sultan, he that glorifies the Sultanate, the world and the faith, Abu al-Ghazi Sulṭān

Husayn Bahadur, may God perpetuate his kingdom in . . . the state (?) "¹⁶¹

161. Kuranoff, "The Timurid Phase," p. 449.

cat. no. 152 Jug

Signed by Abdul-Khaliq Qutbuddin
Herat(?), dated A.H. 901 (A.D. 1495)
Brass inlaid with silver and gold
13 x 7.6 cm (5 1/8 x 3 in.)
London, Keir Collection, 145

Although no longer bearing its characteristic dragon handle, the tendency toward small-scale, intricate design networks that increasingly informed the decoration of Timurid jugs during the second half of the fifteenth century is readily apparent in this dated work. Unlike much of earlier Iranian metalwork, figural representation, both human and animal, is not utilized. Instead cartouches containing poetic verse in Persian and stylized motifs borrowed from the *kitabkhana*—in this case those reminiscent of manuscript illumination—formed a decorative program whose consistent visual effect was one of richness and elegance. These characteristics, sought by the dynasty in its court life and cultural patronage, continued into the following Safavid period in Iran, where subsequent jugs of this type are often identifiable as Safavid only on the basis of dates and inscriptions.¹⁶²

162. Kuranoff, "The Timurid Phase," cat. no. 15.

cat. no. 153 The Beggar before the King

From a *Mantiq al-tayr* of Attar copied by
Sulṭān-ʿAlī Mashhadi
Herat, dated A.H. 888 (A.D. 1483)
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
22.2 x 11.4 cm (8 7/8 x 4 1/2 in.)
New York, Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of
Art, Fletcher Fund, 1963, 63.210.18

The *Mantiq al-tayr* of Attar, a Sufi-inspired tale written in the form of a *mathnawi*, was completed in 1187. Using the actions of birds as metaphors for human behavior, the poem traces the stages of mystical progress from initiation to self-annihilation and the recognition of divine unity.¹⁶³ This copy contains eight paintings; four, including this one, are contemporary with the manuscript, and four were added during the early seventeenth century, presumably at the court of Shah Abbas. This painting illustrates a section of the text concerning a mendicant who falls in love with an Egyptian monarch. Brought before the ruler for his presumption and given the choice of being executed or exiled, he chose the latter. The king promptly ordered him beheaded instead, explaining that if the beggar had been a true lover he would have chosen death rather than separation. Had he done so, the monarch continued, he would have made the beggar his slave.¹⁶⁴

163. Maria Lukens Swietochowski, "The Historical Background and Illustrative Character of the *Mantiq al-tayr* of Attar," in Etinghausen, ed., *Islamic Art in the Museum of Art*, p. 40.

164. Ibid., pp. 52–54.

- cat. no. 154 *The Shaykh of Mehna and the Villager*
From a *Mantiq al-tayr* of Attar copied by
Sultan-Ali Mashhadī
Herat, dated A.H. 888 (A.D. 1483)
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
23.5 x 13.7 cm (9 1/4 x 5 3/8 in.)
New York, Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of
Art, Fletcher Fund, 1963, 63.210.49

"The Shaykh of Mehna and the Villager," like "The Beggar before the King" (cat. no. 153), is one of four late fifteenth-century paintings in the manuscript. According to Attar, Abu-Sa'id ibn Abu'l-Khayr, the shaykh of Mehna (d. 1048), became discouraged and perplexed about the Spiritual Way. Upon seeing a pious old villager with a halo, the shaykh approached and inquired about his condition. The old man responded with a discourse on the need for patience, suffering, and commitment for those who seek the true Sufi way.¹⁶¹ The elegantly dressed figure in the lower right corner depicts Abu-Sa'id, while the elderly ploughman presumably represents the old villager.

161. Swietochowski, "Historical Background," p. 62.

- cat. no. 155 *A Master and His Disciples*
From a lost manuscript
Herat(?), c. 1490
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
36 x 22.3 cm (14 1/4 x 8 7/8 in.)
Geneva, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, no. 424

Although mounted on an album page, this painting originally illustrated an episode in a manuscript. The subject—a master and his disciples—is a common one in late fifteenth-century illustrated manuscripts, including the *Hayat al-abrar* (Perplexity of the pious) of Mir Ali-Sher Nawa'i (fig. 93).¹⁶² The text of the manuscript from which this particular painting was taken has not yet been identified. The inscription on the architectural frieze at the top of the pavilion is from the *Diwan* of Hafiz: "The company of dervishes is paradise on high; the service of dervishes is the basis for exaltedness."¹⁶³

162. Bodleian Ms. Elms 187, f. 244.

163. Trans. Wheeler Thackston.

- cat. no. 156 *Portrait of Hatifi*
Inscribed to Bihzad
Iran or Central Asia, c. 1511–21
Opaque watercolor and gold on paper
9.4 x 6 cm (3 3/4 x 2 3/8 in.)
Geneva, Collection Prince Sadruddin Aga
Khan, M.192

Hatifi (d. 1520/21), like his celebrated uncle Abdul-Rahman Jami, was a late fifteenth-century Timurid poet. Among his best-known works is the *Timurnama*, a lengthy poem modeled after the *ʿAm-i-sikandar* (The Alexandrian canon), one of the poems in the renowned quintet of Amir Khusraw Dihlawi. By using the imagery of Iskandar developed by Amir Khusraw to describe Timur, Hatifi

cleverly transformed the warlord into a legendary Iranian hero. The turban that Hatifi wears in this portrait, with its long red baton, is of Safavid design, and suggests that the painting was made after Shah Isma'il's conquest of Herat and the province of Khurasan in 1511. The inscription above and below the image simply states, "A Portrait of Mawiana Abdullah Hatifi. The work of Master Bihzad." Given the painting's remarkable liveliness and fine detail, there is little reason to doubt the accuracy of this information.

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- cat. no. 157 *Sa'di and the Youth of Kashgar*
From a *Gulistan* of Sa'di
Copied by Sultan-Ali Mashhadī for
Sultan-Husayn Mirza
Herat(?), dated A.H. Muharram 891
(A.D. January 1486)
79 folios with 3 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
23.1 x 15.5 cm (9 1/4 x 6 1/8 in.)
Soudavar Collection

With its superb illumination, calligraphy, and paintings, this manuscript is comparable only with the *Bustan* of Sa'di copied by the same calligrapher for the same patron (cat. no. 146). Although none of the three paintings in this manuscript is signed, one (f. 22a) is inscribed to Abdul-Hayy and two (ff. 31b, 55a) to Bihzad. Only folio 55a, however, is generally accepted as the work of Bihzad.¹⁶⁴ The manuscript is twice dated to A.H. 891: in the colophon and in a lengthy inscription on the architecture of folio 55a. According to several inscriptions on the manuscript's flyleaf, it was in the possession of the Mughal emperors Jahangir and Shahjahan.

164. Ervinghausen, "Bihzad," pp. 1212–13.

- cat. no. 158 *Two Seated Men*
Herat(?), c. 1480–90
Ink on paper
39.1 x 27.6 cm (15 3/4 x 10 7/8 in.)
Cambridge, Harvard University Art Museums
(Arthur M. Sackler Museum), gift of Philip Hofer
in honor of Stuart Cary Welch, 1972–299

This elegant image of two men is one of the few drawings that can be attributed with any certainty to Bihzad. Although clearly a finished work, the figures appear to be either studies for a larger design or derived from a completed composition. According to Dost-Muhammad, Bihzad was a student of Mirak Naqqash, one of the bowmaker sayyids of Herat.¹⁶⁵ Babur adds, "[Bihzad] painted extremely delicately, but he made the faces of beardless people badly by drawing the double chin too big. He drew the faces of bearded people quite well."¹⁶⁶ While it has been argued recently that this drawing may actually be a copy by one of Bihzad's students, both the quality of the line and the subtlety of the characterizations suggest that this is the work of an extremely accomplished artist.¹⁶⁷

165. "Dost-Muhammad," in Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.

166. "Babur Mirza's Baburnama: A Visit to Herat," in *ibid.*

167. Simpson, *Arabic and Persian Painting*, p. 64.

cat. no. 159 *Baharistan of Jami*
 Bukhara, dated A.H. 954 (A.D. 1547)
 Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
 31 x 20 cm (12 1/4 x 7 7/8 in.)
 Lubon, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, L.A.169

Composed by the mystical poet Jami in 1487, the *Baharistan* (Abode of spring) is a heterogeneous work in terms of both its structure—a combination of prose and poetry—and content. Similar in form to the *Gulistan* of Sa'di, its eight chapters (each called a garden) range from anecdotes concerning saints and mystics to biographical notices on poets, the sayings of philosophers, and witticisms. They were conceived by the author as a source of instruction and amusement.¹⁷⁴ This copy stands as a striking example of the lengths taken by the Uzbek elite to assimilate late Timurid culture as practiced at Herat. While the manuscript carries a spurious dedication to Sultan-Husayn Mirza and a false date of A.D. 1498, each page, in fact, bears a dedication to the Uzbek ruler Abdul-Aziz Bahadur. The five exquisite double-page illustrations (four with the name Bihzad inscribed) do not have these dedications, however, and appear to be remounted; the painting, particularly from the standpoint of palette, is more consistent with Uzbek work executed at Bukhara than with that of late Timurid Herat. The implication is painting whose overture to Timurid cultural hegemony is unabashedly complete in its details. By imitation of Timurid forms and the evocation of their patrons and artists, the Uzbeks attempted to create for themselves the perfect world of their predecessors and rivals.

174. Browne, *Literary History*, 5143b, 511.

This list details both manuscript openings and works exhibited at only one venue. Catalogue entries not listed here were exhibited in both Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles.

- | | |
|---|---|
| cat. no. 1
Exhibited: ff. 11b-12a | cat. no. 35
Exhibited: ff. 37b-38a |
| cat. no. 2
Exhibited: ff. 1b-2a | cat. no. 36
Exhibited: ff. 18b-19a |
| cat. no. 12A-C
Exhibited: ff. 11a, 21a, 34a | cat. no. 38
Exhibited: ff. 483b-484a |
| cat. no. 13
Exhibited: ff. 23b-238 | cat. no. 39
Exhibited: ff. 59b-60a
Los Angeles only |
| cat. no. 14
Exhibited: ff. 128b-129a
Los Angeles only | cat. no. 40
Exhibited: interior of upper
binding flap Washington,
D.C., only |
| cat. no. 15
Exhibited: ff. 55b-56a
Washington, D.C., only | cat. no. 41
Exhibited: ff. 3b, 9a |
| cat. no. 16A-B
Exhibited: ff. 49b-50a (vol. 1)
and 213b-214a (vol. 2) | cat. no. 43
Exhibited: ff. 16b-17a |
| cat. no. 17
Los Angeles only | cat. no. 46
Exhibited: f. 371a
Washington, D.C., only |
| cat. no. 18
Exhibited: f. 1a
Los Angeles only | cat. no. 49
Washington, D.C., only |
| cat. no. 19
Exhibited: ff. 1b-2a
Los Angeles only | cat. no. 53
Exhibited: ff. 110b-111a
Los Angeles only |
| cat. no. 20
Exhibited: ff. 1b-2a | cat. no. 55
Exhibited: ff. 1b-2a |
| cat. no. 21
Exhibited: ff. 79b-80a
Los Angeles only | cat. no. 56
Exhibited: ff. 50b-51a
Los Angeles only |
| cat. no. 22
Exhibited: ff. 194b-195a | cat. no. 57
Washington, D.C., only |
| cat. no. 23
Exhibited: ff. 26b, 28a
Washington, D.C., only | cat. no. 58
Exhibited: f. 71a |
| cat. no. 26
Exhibited: ff. 1b-4a | cat. no. 59
Exhibited: ff. 74b-75a
Los Angeles only |
| cat. no. 29
Exhibited: ff. 317b-318a | cat. no. 60
Los Angeles only |
| cat. no. 32
Exhibited: ff. 39b-40a
Washington, D.C., only | cat. no. 61
Washington, D.C., only |
| | cat. no. 62
Exhibited: f. 10a |

cat. no. 63
Los Angeles only

cat. no. 64
Washington, D.C., only

cat. no. 65
Los Angeles only

cat. no. 66
Washington, D.C., only

cat. no. 67
Washington, D.C., only

cat. no. 68
Los Angeles only

cat. no. 69
Los Angeles only

cat. no. 70
Los Angeles only

cat. no. 71
Washington, D.C., only

cat. no. 72
Washington, D.C., only

cat. no. 73
Washington, D.C., only

cat. no. 74
Los Angeles only

cat. no. 75
Los Angeles only

cat. no. 76
Washington, D.C., only

cat. no. 77
Los Angeles only

cat. no. 78
Washington, D.C., only

cat. no. 79
Los Angeles only

cat. no. 80
Los Angeles only

cat. no. 81
Los Angeles only

cat. no. 82
Washington, D.C., only

cat. no. 84
Los Angeles only

cat. no. 88
Los Angeles only

cat. no. 90
Washington, D.C., only

cat. no. 91
Los Angeles only

cat. no. 92
Washington, D.C., only

cat. no. 93
Washington, D.C., only

cat. no. 94
Los Angeles only

cat. no. 95
Washington, D.C., only

cat. no. 96
Los Angeles only

cat. no. 97
Washington, D.C., only

cat. no. 98
Los Angeles only

cat. no. 99
Exhibited, interior of the
upper cover of binding
Los Angeles only

cat. no. 100
Washington, D.C., only

cat. no. 101
Exhibited, ff. 1b-2a

cat. no. 102
Exhibited, ff. 1b-2a

cat. no. 103
Exhibited, ff. 1a, 32b, 42b

cat. no. 104
Los Angeles only

cat. no. 105
Washington, D.C., only

cat. no. 106
Washington, D.C., only

cat. no. 107
Washington, D.C., only

cat. no. 108
Los Angeles only

cat. no. 112
Los Angeles only

cat. no. 115
Los Angeles only

cat. no. 118
Washington, D.C., only

cat. no. 121
not exhibited

cat. no. 138
Exhibited, ff. 1b-2a

cat. no. 139
Exhibited, ff. 1b-2a
Washington, D.C., only

cat. no. 140
Exhibited, ff. 273b-274a

cat. no. 141
Exhibited, ff. 1b-2a

cat. no. 145
Exhibited, ff. 160b-161a

cat. no. 146
Exhibited, ff. 52b-53a

cat. no. 147
Exhibited, ff. 1b-2a, 82b-83a,
115b-116a, 174b-175a,
282b-283a, 359b-360a,
449b-450a

cat. no. 148
Exhibited, ff. 1b-2a
Washington, D.C., only

cat. no. 157
Exhibited, ff. 54b-55a

cat. no. 159
Exhibited, ff. 196b-199a

Arzadasht

164 Translated and annotated by Wheeler Thackston

This document (Topkapı Sarayı Library, H. 2153, f. 98a) is the only surviving example of a report from a Timurid *kitabkhana*. Although neither author nor recipient is named, internal evidence strongly suggests that it is a progress report to Baysunghur ibn Shahrukh from Ja'far Tabrizi, the head of Baysunghur's artistic establishment. The document and extensive commentary appear in Wheeler Thackston, *A Century of Princes: Sources in Timurid History and Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, in press).

PETITION

From the most humble servants of the regal library, whose eyes are as expectant of the dust from the hoofs of the regal steed as the ears of those who fast are for the cry of *Allahu akbar*,¹ and whose joyful and gleeful shout of "Praise be unto God who hath taken away sorrow from us! verily our Lord is ready to forgive and to reward"² reaches the apex of the celestial sphere.

[1] Amir Khalil has finished the waves in two sea scenes of the *Gulistan* and will begin to apply color.

Mawlana Ali on the day this petition is being written is designing a *debacha* for the *Shahnama*. His eyes were sore for a few days.

Khwaja Ghiyathuddin has progressed in two scenes of the *Rasayil* to the point of the faces, and another scene is nearly there. At present he is busy repairing a scene that was spoiled in the *Gulistan*.³

Mawlana Shihab has applied gold to the *debacha*, four *lawhs* and the *shuraf* of the *debacha* [in preparation] for painting,⁴ and he has outlined eight rosettes within the *debacha* and at present is busy with another scene in the repair of the *Gulistan*.⁵

[5] Mawlana Qiwamuddin has finished the arabesques (*islimi*) margins for the binding of the *Shahnama* and has taken up the brush for the pleasure scene (? *'ayshi tamasha*) of the body of the binding. The groundwork (*bum*) is nearly two-thirds done; the "back and head and neck" [back and flap ?] have been attached (*chaspanida*) and *tariq* (groove?) has been drawn.

Mawlana Shams lacks one section of making a facsimile of the treatises in the late Khwaja's hand.

Mahmud has completed the groundwork for seven out of ten *lawhs* for the *Diwan* of Khwaja [Kirman] and is busy with the rest.

Haji Mahmud has done the body of the front and outlining (*tahrir*) for the binding of the facsimile of the treatises and is busy with the drawing of outlines (*guzar*).

Khwaja Mahmud has finished the front and back of the binding for the Khwaja's calligraphic treatises and is busy with the head and neck (flap ?).

[10] Khwaja Ata, the ruling maker (*jadwalkash*), has finished Mawlana Sa'duddin's *Tarikh* and the *Diwan* of Khwaja and is busy with the *Shahnama*.

Mawlana Qurb has copied ten sections of the *Tarikh-i Tahari*.

Khwaja Ata has finished the sections of the *Gulistan* and the

zarlawh for the history that Mawlana Sa'duddin has copied. He has done the groundwork on the two *lawhs* and is busy finishing them.

Mawlana Muhammad [ibn] Mutahhar has finished writing 15,000 verses of the *Shahnama*.

Khwaja Abdul-Rahim is busy making designs for the binders, illuminators, tentmakers, and tilemakers.

[15] Mawlana Sa'duddin has finished the lid of the Begum's little chest, and one side of it is ready for the final touches. The door panel (? *tabaqa-i dar*) that was remaining will be completed in fifteen days.

Mawlana Shams has finished one *kashfi*⁷ and has done groundwork on one *lawh* for the *Diwan* of Khwaja.

Haji and Khata'i have gotten two other *kashfus* to the point of gilding.

Another *kashfi* has almost been finished by Abdul-Salam.

All the painters are working on painting (*rang-amez*) and fitting (*shustaman*) seventy-five tent timbers.

[20] Ustad Sayfuddin is well again after his illness.

There was a design by Mir Dawlatyar for a saddle. Khwaja Mir Hasan copied it, and Mir Shamsuddin, Khwaja Mir Hasan's son, and Ustad Dawlatkhwaja are busy executing it in mother-of-pearl.

Your most humble servant, the most miserable speck of dust has finished writing three and a half sections of the *Shahnama* and has begun to write the *Nuzhat al-arwah*.

[B] BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

[1] The court (*dargah*): the stonecutting work has been completed, but the tile cutting for the inscriptions and crenellations remains and is being worked on. The paving of the passageway is done and the crenellated doorway of the picture gallery has been put in place and the projecting balcony installed.

The old palace: the dome and parterre (*badaman*) up to under the stalactites have been painted (*naqqash-shuda*). The columns of the eastern wing have been replaced.

The scriptorium begun for the painters has been finished, and the painters and scribes have taken up occupancy.

The stonecutters are working on the pool.

[5] The new garden: of the wall that was ordered to be in six courses, [in] some [places] four courses and [in] others three courses have been completed; and [the workmen] are at work. The foundations for the *nwan* and *dalan* have been laid. The great bridge (*shah-pul*) in front of the *nwan* has been cut and will [soon] be laid in.

The courtyard garden: of the *qibla* wall, three courses have been made, and as soon as the tilemakers finish the stone court, they will get to work on the *dado* (*izara*) of the aforementioned garden.

The mud roof, plaster floor, and whitewash for the crane house (*kulanghana*) have been finished.

[C] TENTS

Fourteen pieces of the "top cover" and seven pieces of the side cover (?): of these twenty-one pieces six have been finished. The *na'ha-yi qut'a* (velvet ornaments) have all been sewn, and of the twenty-one medallions for the middle of the calligraphy pieces, which have figural designs, six have been finished. Of the *shuraf* (spires), *mubhas* (embroidered cover), and borders, nearly a quarter have been sewn. The work on the outside of the tent (*khargah*), the basis of which is linen (*muthqali*) and the design of which is silken weave (*sandalluf*) and the outlining of which is gold embroidery, approximately a quarter of the work has been sewn, and [the workers] are busy completing [the job].

NOTES

1. The first words of the call to prayer, here specifically the call to evening prayer that signals the end of the Ramadan fast, which is eagerly awaited by the observant.

2. Koran 15-34.

3. The syntax of this sentence is problematic; apparently it should be read as *halk ba-yek mawdi' 'imarat ki az gulistan batil kard-and mashghulast*, where *'imarat* must be taken together with *batil* to mean "repair, fix, render correct."

4. This word may refer to the finials, usually in blue, that radiate from a rosette and rise from an illuminated frontispiece. The word occurs again in section 6 on tents (below).

5. The use of the word *suratgar* for painting here is puzzling. Normally it refers to figural painting, whereas *debachas* generally are entirely geometrical and floral. Perhaps a conjunction is missing. "has applied gold to the *debacha*, four *lawhs*, the *shuraf* of the *debacha*, and the figural painting."

6. The entire paragraph is problematic. The last phrase contains the obscure *'imarat-i gulistan*.

7. A puzzling term. *Kashk* means "ship," and though not attested elsewhere, it may be used here, like *jung*, as equivalent to the Arabic term *zafna*, an oblong book, usually a miscellany, bound on the short side. It is unlikely that these craftsmen are making ships, whatever they are doing.

Preliminary Index of Timurid Cultural Patronage and Activity

- 166 This preliminary index suggests the range and depth of cultural interests among members of the Timurid royal house. It is not exhaustive, however, and certain activities, such as architectural patronage, can be found elsewhere (see Bernard O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan* [Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers in assoc. with Undena Publications, 1987], pp. 79-99 and catalogue; and Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilber, *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988], 1: 221-467). The patrons are arranged alphabetically. All works listed were commissioned by the patron named unless noted otherwise. Both extant works and those known only through literary sources are included. Whenever possible primary authors have been cited, using the following abbreviations:

- AMK Ali ibn Mahmud al-Kirmani, *Ma'athir-i Mahmudshahi*. London, British Library, Or.11.
- AR Abdul-Razzaq Samarqandi, *Matla' al-sa' daynuh-majma' i Bahrayn*. Ed. M. Shafi. Lahore 1941, 1949.
- B Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, *Baburnama*. Trans. Annette Susannah Beveridge. London: Luzac & Co., 1971.
- D "Mir Dawlatshah Samarqandi's *Tadhkirat al-shu'ara*." In Wheeler Thackston, *A Century of Princes. Sources on Timurid History and Art*. Cambridge, Mass.: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, in press.
- DM "Dost-Muhammad's Introduction to the Bahram Mirza Album." In *ibid*.
- FH Fakhri al-Harawi, *Rawzat al-salatim*. Ed. Pir Sayyid Hussamuddin Rashdi. Karachi: Sindhi Adabi Board, 1960.
- IA Ibn Arabshah, *Tamerlane or Timur the Great Amir, from the Arabic Life of Ahmed ibn Arabshah*. Trans. J. H. Saunders. London: Luzac & Co., 1936.
- K "Khwandamir's *Habib al-siyar*." In Thackston, *A Century of Princes*.
- MASN Mir Ali-Sher Nawa'i, *Maqalis al-nafa'is: Two Sixteenth-Century Persian Translations*. Ed. A. Hekmat. Tehran, 1945.
- QA Qazi Ahmad, *Gulistan-i Humar*. In V. Minorsky, trans. *Calligraphers and Painters: A Treatise by Qazi Ahmad, Son of Mir Munshi*. Washington, D.C., Freer Gallery Publications, Smithsonian Institution, 1959.
- SAY Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi, *Zafarnama*. Calcutta, 1887.
- TS Taj-i Salmani, *Shams al-hush*. Trans. H. Roemer. Wiesbaden, 1956.

Abu-Bakr ibn Miranshah ibn Timur
1382-1409

Poet (Turki)
H. R. Roemer, "Timur in Iran," in *The Cambridge History of Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 6, 139.

Abdul-Latif ibn Ulugh-Beg ibn Shahrukh
d. 1450

Poet
A. Schimmel, "Babur Padishah, the Poet, with an Account of the Poetical Talent in His Family," *Islamic Culture* 34, no. 2 (1960): 127.

Vessels in treasury
Gold and silver
AR, as cited in V. V. Barthold, *Ulugh-Beg*, vol. 2 of *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, trans. V. and T. Minorsky (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958), p. 151.

Abu-Bakr Mirza ibn Abu-Sa'id
d. 1479

Poet (Persian and Turki)
D; MASN, as cited in Schimmel, "Babur Padishah," p. 129.

Abu'l-Qasim Babur ibn Baysunghur ibn Shahrukh
1422-57

Poet (Turki)
H. R. Roemer, "Timur in Iran," p. 159.

Binding of a *Khamisa* of Nizami, Herat, dated A.H. 849 (A.D. 1445-46) (cat. no. 32)
Tooled leather
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, H. 781

Anthology of Mystical Poetry, c. 1449-57
108 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, N.F.140

Collection of Mystical Poetry, Balkh, dated A.H. 859 (A.D. 1455)
Copied by Muhammad al-Jami
50 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, N.F.141

Drawn of Hafiz, Balkh, dated A.H. middle of Ramadan 859 (A.D. end of August 1455)
Copied by Muhammad al-Jami
154 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, N.F.442

Zil-i Gurkani
Gift from Abu-Sa'id in 1456
AR, as cited in V. V. Barthold, *Mir 'Ali-Shir*, vol. 3 of *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, trans. V. and T. Minorsky (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962), p. 43

Sharh-i qasida-i khamriyya-i ibn al-Farid, dated A.H. end of Rabi' II 860 (A.D. beginning of March 1456)
95 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
Tashkent, Biruni Institute, Academy of Sciences, no. 559

Abu-Sa'id ibn Sultan-Muhammad ibn Miranshah
1424-69

Khamisa of Nizami, dated A.H. 826 (A.D. 1423)
8 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
New York, Kevorkian Foundation;
B. W. Robinson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Persian Paintings in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 12.

Koran, Iran, dated A.H. 845 (A.D. 1442) (cat. no. 141)
Copied by Muhammad Mu'min ibn Abdullah Mawarid
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
St. Andrews University Library, 29

Tiles for a building inscription (dispersed), Iran, dated A.H. 860 (A.D. 1455) (cat. no. 113A-B)
Inscriptions copied by Nusratuddin Muhammad
Molded relief ceramic with luster-painted decoration
Ernst Grube, "Notes on the Decorative Arts of the Timurid Period," in *Gurra-jamanjarka: Studi in onore di Giuseppe Tucci* (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1974), p. 244.

Zil-i Gurkani
Sent to Abu'l-Qasim Babur ibn Baysunghur in 1456
AR, as cited in Barthold, *Mir 'Ali-Shir*, p. 43.

Wall paintings at the Tarabkhana, Herat, c. 1459-69
B, p. 302.

European, Indian, Ottoman, and Chinese textiles; vases and utensils of precious metals studded with jewels and pearls
Gifts from the sultan of Malwa, 1467
AMK, as cited in Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, "Influence and Prestige of the Sultan of Delhi in India and the Neighboring Countries, with Special Reference to Central Asia—Fifteenth Century," *Central Asiatic Journal* 29, nos. 1-2 (1985): 110.

Folio of calligraphy copied by Azhar Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, H. 2130, f. 28b

Ala'uddawla ibn Baysunghur ibn Shahrukh
1417-60

Illustrated anthology (*jang*), Herat, after 1433
Copied by Mawlana Fariduddin Ja'far (commissioned by Baysunghur ibn Shahrukh, completed under Ala'uddawla)
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
DM.

"Tahmina Enters Rustam's Chamber," Herat, c. 1433-40 (?) (cat. no. 45)
Inscribed with the name of Ala'uddawla
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
Cambridge, Harvard University Art Museums (Arthur M. Sackler Museum), 1939.225

Casket (*durri*), Iran or Central Asia, c. 1450 (cat. no. 50)
Jade
San Francisco, Asian Art Museum, the Avery Brundage Collection, B 60 J619

Radi' al-zaman ibn Sultan-Husayn Mirza
d. 1514

Poet
MASN, as cited in Schimmel, "Babur Padishah," p. 127.

Diwan of Amir Khusraw Dihlawi,
Baghdad, dated A.H. 28 Ramadan 869
(A.D. 24 May 1465)
Copied by Shaykh Mahmud Fir-Buday
429 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Leningrad, State Public Library, Ms. 104

Khamsa of Mir Ali-Sher Nawa'i, Herat,
dated A.H. 890 (A.D. 1485) (fig. 93)
5 volumes with 57, 78, 65, 97, 48 folios
and 13 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Elliot 287,
40B, 317, 319, Manchester, John
Rylands Library, Turk Ms. 1

Drinking cups
Gold and silver
B, p. 70.

Baysunghur ibn Shahrukh 1399–1434

Poet (Persian and Turki)
D; QA, pp. 68–69.

Tabaqat-i nasim of Minhaj ibn Siraj
Muhammad Juzjani, Herat, dated A.H.
814 (A.D. 1411–12)
Copied by Ahmad ibn Mas'ud al-Rumi
155 folios with 2 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
West Berlin, Staatsbibliothek,
Petersmann I. 186

Dedicatory inscription for the main
mihrab of the *masjid-i jami'* of
Gawharshad, Mashhad, dated A.H. 821
(A.D. 1418) (fig. 25)
Designed by Baysunghur
Tile mosaic
In situ

Anthology, Shiraz, dated A.H. 823
(A.D. 1420) (cat. no. 37)
Copied by Mahmud al-Husayni
Gift to Baysunghur
950 folios with 29 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
West Berlin, Museen für Islamische
Kunst, I. 4628, East Berlin, Staatliche
Museen zu Berlin, Islamisches Museum,
I. 4628

Calligraphic exercise, Herat,
c. 1420–30 (fig. 39)

Executed by Baysunghur and
companions
Ink on paper
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H. 2152, f. 31b

Folio of poetry, dated A.H. 826 (A.D.
1422–23)
Copied by Ja'far al-Baysunghuri
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H. 2153, f. 5a

Text page, dated A.H. 829 (A.D. 1425)
Copied by Ja'far al-Baysunghuri
Ink on paper
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H. 2160, f. 12b

Taj al-ma'athir fi tarikh of Sadruddin
ibn Muhammad ibn Hasan Nizami,
dated A.H. 25 Shawwal 829 (A.D. 31
August 1426)
Copied by Qutbuddin ibn Hasan Shah
al-Kirmani
289 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
University of Leningrad, Oriental
Library, 578

Anthology, Herat, dated A.H. 830 (A.D.
1426–27) (fig. 40)
Copied by Shamsuddin al-Sultani
56 folios with 7 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Florence, I Tatt, Berenson Collection

Gulistan of Sa'di, Herat, dated A.H. 830
(A.D. 1426–27) (cat. no. 41)
Copied by Ja'far al-Baysunghuri
56 folios with 8 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ms. 119

Arzadasht, Herat, c. 1427–28 (fig. 51)
Written by Ja'far al-Baysunghuri to
Baysunghur
Ink on paper
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H. 2153, f. 98a
For a complete listing of objects men-
tioned in the document see Appendix 1.

Binding, decorated by Hajji
Muhammad
Chest, executed by Mawlana
Sa'duddin
Kashti, executed by Abdull Salam
Kashti, executed by Mawlana Shams

Kashti, worked to the point of gilding
by Hajji
Kashti, worked to the point of gilding
by Khata'i
Nuzhat al-arwah, copied by Ja'far
al-Baysunghuri
Treasure (*rasayn*), executed by Khwaja
Ghiyathuddin
Design for a saddle, drawn by Mir
Dawlatyar
Saddle, executed by Mir Shamsuddin
and Ustad Dawlatkhwa
Tent

Kalila u Dimna of Nizamuddin
Abu'l-Ma'ali Nasrullah, Herat, dated
A.H. Muharram 833 (A.D. October 1429
(cat. no. 21)
Copied by Shamsuddin Baysunghuri
146 folios with 25 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
R. 1022

Anthology (*Shahnama* of Firdawsi and
Khamsa of Nizami), dated A.H. 833
(A.D. 1430)
Copied by Muhammad Muhtashur
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Tehran, Malik Library, no. 6531

Double-page illuminated frontispiece,
Herat, c. 1430 (fig. 43)
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ms. 120

Tarikh-i jahangushay of Ala'uddin
Ara Malik Juwayni, dated A.H. 833
(A.D. 1430)
Copied by Sa'duddin Mashhadi
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Leningrad, State Public Library, Pers.
N.S. 233

Shahnama of Firdawsi, Herat, dated
A.H. Jumada I 833 (A.D. January 1430)
(fig. 42)
Copied by Ja'far al-Baysunghuri
21 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Tehran, Gulistan Library, no. 61

Tarjuma-i tarikh-i Tabari, Herat, dated
A.H. 20 Jumada II 833 (A.D. 21 March
1430)
Copied by Qutbuddin ibn Hasan Shah
al-Kirmani
497 folios

Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Leningrad, State Public Library, Pers.
N.S. 49

Kalila & Dimna of Nizamuddin
Abu'l-Ma'ali Nasrullah, Herat, dated
A.H. 834 (A.D. 1431)
Copied by Ja'far
172 folios with 19 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, H. 362

Tarikh-i Isfahan of Hamza ibn
al-Hasan al-Isfahani, dated A.H. 834
(A.D. 1431)
Copied by Ja'far al-Baysunghuri
126 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
London, British Library, Or. 2773

Kulliyat of Khwaja Imaduddin Faqih,
dated A.H. 26 Dhu'l-Hijja 834 (A.D. 4
September 1431)
Copied by Azhar
390 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Elliot 210

Chahar maqala of Ahmad ibn Umar
ibn Ali, known as Nizami Arudi, Herat,
dated A.H. Rabi' i 835 (A.D. Novem-
ber 1431)
51 folios with 10 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Istanbul, Türk ve İslam Eserleri
Müzesi, 1934

Tarikh-i jahangushay of Ala'uddin
Ata Malik Juwayni, dated A.H. 835
(A.D. 1431-32)
334 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
London, Kerr Collection, vol. 62

Basmala, before 1433
Written by Baysunghur in a copy of the
Jami' al-tawarikh executed for Shahrukh
728 folios
Gold ink on paper
London, British Library, Add. 7628,
f. 410b

Baysunghurnama, dated A.H. 837 (A.D.
1434)
Elegies on the death of Baysunghur by
court poets
Copied by Azhar

Ink on paper
Tabriz, Kitabkhana-i Milli, Ms. 2967,
ff. 2b-3a

Illustrated anthology (*jung*), after 1434
Copied by Mawlana Fariduddin Ja'far
(completed under Ala'uddawla)
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
DM.

Album of calligraphy
103 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H. 2310

Calligraphic inscription
Ink on paper
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H. 2152, f. 10a

Calligraphic inscription
Executed by Baysunghur
Ink on paper
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H. 2152, f. 20a

Calligraphic inscription
Executed by Baysunghur
Ink on paper
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H. 2152, f. 21b

Design inscribed with the name of
Baysunghur
Opaque watercolor and ink on paper
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H. 2152, f. 96b

Detached page of *qasidas* of Amir
Khusraw Dihlawi and Salma
Ink and gold on paper
West Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Diez
album f. 74.S.26, #5

Diwan of Shamsuddin Tabasi
Copied by Shams al-Baysunghuri
D.

Text page
Copied by Ja'far al-Tabrizi
Ink on paper
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H. 2160, f. 15a

Text page
Ink on paper
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H. 2160, f. 32b

2 text pages, Herat
Copied by Muhammad ibn Husam
(Shams al-Baysunghuri)

Ink on paper
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, B. 411,
ff. 136b-137a

Zubdat al-tawarikh of Hafiz-i Abru
790 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Leningrad, State Public Library,
Dorn 268

Baysunghur ibn Sultan-Mahmud ibn
Abu-Sa'id
1477-99

Poet (Persian), calligrapher, painter
B, p. 111.

Calligraphy
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H. 2154, f. 17a

Faridun-Husayn Mirza ibn Sultan-Husayn
d. 1510

Poet
MASN, as cited in Schimmel, "Bahar
Padishah," p. 127.

Diwan of Hafiz
Recension by Faridun-Husayn,
c. 1501-2
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
London, British Library, Or. 3247

Gawharshad bint Ghiyathuddin Tarkhan
d. 1457

Seal, Herat, before 1457 (cat. no. 128)
Jade, (nephrite)
Leningrad, State Hermitage, SA-13650

Ibrahim-Sultan ibn Shahrukh
1394-1435

Armor, Shiraz, c. 1415-35 (cat. no. 31)
Iron damascened in gold
Riyadh, Collection Rifaat Sheikh El Ard

Mathnawi-i Ma'navi of Jalaluddin
Rumi, Shiraz, dated A.H. 822 (A.D. 1419)
277 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Lisbon, Calouste Gulbenkian Founda-
tion, L.A. 168

Tarikh-i Jahangir of Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi, dated A.H. 822 (A.D. 1419-20)
Eleanor Sims, "The Garrett Manuscript of the Zafar-Name: A Study in Fifteenth-Century Timurid Patronage," Ph.D. diss. (Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1973), pp. 42-43.

Calligraphic scroll, Isfahar, dated A.H. 823 (A.D. 1420)
Copied by Ibrahim-Sultan
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, H.2152, f. 6a

Koran, dated A.H. 826 (A.D. 1422-23)
Copied by Ibrahim-Sultan
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, M.6

Koran, c. 1424
Copied by Ibrahim-Sultan
16 folios
Mashhad, Imam Riza Library, no. 414

Koran, Shiraz, dated A.H. 4 Ramadan 830 (A.D. 29 June 1427) (cat. no. 22)
Copied in 2 volumes by Ibrahim-Sultan
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1913, 13.228.1-2

Jum'i al-sahih, dated A.H. 832 (A.D. 1429)
149 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Faisullah 419

Diwan of Amir Khusrav Dihlavi, Shiraz, dated A.H. 834 (A.D. 1430-31) (cat. no. 18)
375 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
Istanbul, Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, 1982

Koran, dated A.H. 834 (A.D. 1430-31)
Copied by Ibrahim-Sultan
34 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
Shiraz, Pars Museum, 410 M/P

Inscriptions on the tomb of Sa'di, Shiraz, dated A.H. 835 (A.D. 1431-32),
Executed by Ibrahim-Sultan
QA, pp. 70-71.

Koran, dated A.H. 837 (A.D. 1434)
Copied by Ibrahim-Sultan (?)
404 folios

Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
Mashhad, Imam Riza Library, no. 215

Shahnama of Firdawsi, Shiraz, c. 1415 (cat. no. 58)
Illuminated by Nasir al-Sultan
469 folios with 47 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ouseley Add.176

Zafarnama of Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi, Shiraz, dated A.H. Dhu'l-Hijja 819 (A.D. June-July 1436) (cat. nos. 3, 29, 30)
Copied by Ya'qub ibn Hasan, known as Siraj al-Husayni al-Sultani
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
Dispersed; Sims, "Garrett Manuscript," pp. 76-96.

Anthology (*Kalila u Dimna*, *Marzubannama*, and *Sarbadnama*)
579 folios with 27 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Fath 3682

Inscription
Executed by Abdullah Sayrafi
Moved from Tabriz to Shiraz by order of Ibrahim-Sultan
Stone
QA, p. 63.

Inscriptions at Persepolis
Executed by Ibrahim-Sultan
V. Minorsky, "A Civil and Military Review in Fars in 881/1476," in *The Turks, Iran, and the Caucasus in the Middle Ages* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1978).

Inscriptions of the Dar al-Safa and Dar al-Aytam madrasas, Shiraz
Executed by Ibrahim-Sultan
QA, pp. 69-70.

Inscriptions of the mausoleum (*mazar*) of Baba Lutfallah Imaduddin
Executed by Ibrahim-Sultan
V. Minorsky, trans., *Calligraphers and Painters. A Treatise by Qadi Ahmad, Son of Mir Munshi* (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery Publications, Smithsonian Institution, 1959), p. 28

Inscriptions of the Zahiriyya, Shiraz
Executed by Ibrahim-Sultan
QA, p. 70

Inscription over the gates of Shiraz
Executed by Ibrahim-Sultan
QA, p. 71.

Koran
Copied for the cemetery of Baba Lutfallah Imaduddin by Ibrahim-Sultan
QA, p. 71.

Iskandar-Sultan ibn Umar-Shaykh ibn Timur
1384-1413

Poet (Turki)
D.

Durrat al-taj li-ghurrah ad-diba of Qutbuddin Mahmud ibn Mas'ud al-Shirazi, Shiraz, c. 1410 (cat. no. 53)
211 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
Private collection

Anthology, Shiraz, dated A.H. 813 (A.D. 1410-11) (fig. 45)
444 folios with 34 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
Lisbon, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, L.A.161

Anthology, Shiraz, dated A.H. 813-14 (A.D. 1410-11) (cat. no. 35)
Copied by Muhammad al-Halwa'i and Nasir al-Katib
542 folios with 20 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
London, British Library, Add.27261

Horoscope, Shiraz, dated A.H. 22 Dhu'l-Hijja 813 (A.D. 18 April 1411) (cat. no. 36)
Compiled and copied by Mahmud ibn Yahya ibn al-Hasan al-Kashi
86 folios with 1 illustration and 2 drawings
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
London, Wellcome Institute Library, Ms. Persian 474

Tarikh-i khayrat, dated A.H. 814-16 (A.D. 1412-14)
Sims, "Garrett Manuscript," pp. 40-41

Anthology, dated A.H. 815-16 (A.D. 1412-13)
700 folios
Istanbul, Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, 2044

- Portion of an illustrated scientific manuscript, Isfahan, dated A.H. 23 Rabi' 816 (A.D. 1413) (figs. 48-50)
30 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, B.411
"Iskandar Anonymous" of Mu'nuddin Natanzi, dated A.H. 816 (A.D. 1413-14)
Sims, "Garrett Manuscript," pp. 41-42;
John Woods, "The Rise of Timurid Historiography," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 46, no. 2 (April 1987), 89.
- Muntakhabat-i ash'ar* of Mir Haydar Khwarazmi Turkiguy
369 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
Tehran, Gulistan Palace Library, no. 647
- Preface to the *Jami' al-sultani*
5 folios
Ink on paper
Copy in Cambridge University Library, Browne H3 (7)
- Zil-i Il-Khani* of Nasiruddin al-Tusi
Recension
291 folios
Ink on paper
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, A.3513
- Ismat al-Dunya**
Khamisa of Nizami, Herat, dated A.H. 849 (A.D. 1445-46) (cat. no. 32)
Copied by Yusuf al-Jami
325 folios with 13 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, H.781
- Khalil-Sultan ibn Miran Shah ibn Timur**
1384-1411
Poet (Persian and Turki)
D, FH, as cited in Schimmel, "Babur Padishah," pp. 128-29.
Robes, belts, quivers, and swords adorned with precious stones
Gifts to Ulugh-Beg, c. 1405
F, as cited in Barthold, *Ulugh-Beg*, p. 67
Armchair
Gold
Gift from the Mughals, c. 1409
- IA, as cited in Barthold, *Ulugh-Beg*, p. 75.
2 folios of calligraphy
Copied by Nuruddin ibn al-Adil al-Baghdadi
Ink on paper
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, H.2152, f. 19b
Qasida (elegy for Timur by Khwaja Ismatullah Bukhari)
Presented to Khalil-Sultan K.
- Mas'ud Mirza ibn Mahmud Mirza**
d. 1507
Poet
FH, as cited in Schimmel, "Babur Padishah," p. 130.
- Miran Shah ibn Timur**
1367-1408
Poet
D
Seal, Iran, before 1408 (cat. no. 127)
Chrysolite
Leningrad, State Hermitage, SA-8481
al-Kamil fi'l-tarikh of Ibn al-Athir
Persian translation
K
- Muhammad-Husayn Mirza ibn Sultan-Husayn Mirza**
d. 1507
Poet
MASN, as cited in Schimmel, "Babur Padishah," p. 127.
- Muhammad-Juki ibn Shahrukh**
1402-44
Saddle, studded with rubies and turquoise
Presented to Muhammad-Juki, 1430
D
Shahnama of Firdaws, Iran, c. 1444 (cat. no. 43)
491 folios with 31 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
London, Royal Asiatic Society, Ms. 239
- Muhammad-Muhsin ibn Sultan Husayn**
d. 1507
Poet
MASN, as cited in Schimmel, "Babur Padishah," p. 127.
Hasht bihasht of Amir Khusraw Dihlawi, Herat(?), dated A.H. 902 (A.D. 1496-97) (fig. 95)
Copied by Sultan-Ali Mashhadi
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, H.676
- Muhammad-Sultan (Kichik Mirza) ibn Sultan-Ahmad ibn Sidi-Ahmad ibn Miran Shah**
d. 1484
Poet (Turki)
FH and MASN, as cited in Schimmel, "Babur Padishah," p. 129.
- Muhammad-Mu'min ibn Badi'uzzaman ibn Sultan-Husayn Mirza**
d. 1497
Poet
MASN, as cited in Schimmel, "Babur Padishah," p. 127.
- Muzaffar-Husayn ibn Sultan-Husayn Mirza**
Poet
MASN, as cited in Schimmel, "Babur Padishah," p. 127.
- Shah-Garib ibn Sultan-Husayn Mirza**
Poet (Persian and Turki)
MASN, as cited in Schimmel, "Babur Padishah," p. 127.
- Shahrukh ibn Timur**
1377-1447
Shams al-husn of Tajuddin Salmani, dated A.H. 813 (A.D. 1410)
Completed under Ulugh-Beg
Woods, "Timurid Historiography," p. 88
Zayl-i Zafarnama-i Shams of Hafiz-i Abri, dated A.H. 814 (A.D. 1411)
Woods, "Timurid Historiography," p. 96.

Zu'l-Khaqani, dated A.H. 815 (A.D. 1413)
London, India Office Library, Persian
Ms. 232

Tarikh-i Shahrukh of Hafiz-i Abru,
dated A.H. 816 (A.D. 1413-14)
Woods, "Timurid Historiography,"
p. 96.

Muntakhab al-tawarikh-i Mu'ini of
Mu'inuddin Natanzi
Second recension presented to
Shahrukh, 1414
Woods, "Timurid Historiography,"
p. 84.

Jughrafiya-yi tarikh-i of Hafiz-i Abru,
c. 1414-20
Woods, "Timurid Historiography,"
p. 96.

Kulliyat-i tarikh-i of Hafiz-i Abru,
Herat, dated A.H. 818-19
(A.D. 1415-16) (cat. no. 46)
938 folios with 20 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library, B.282

Nasihat-i Shahrukh dar Suluk-i Muluk
of Jalaluddin Zakariyya ibn Muham-
mad ibn Ubaydullah al-Qayini al-Nasafi,
dated A.H. 27 Jumada II 820 (A.D. 17
August 1417)
342 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, A.F.112

Majma' al-tawarikh of Hafiz-i Abru,
dated A.H. 6 Muharram 829 (A.D. 18
November 1425)
435 folios with 142 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
H. 1633; for illustrations from con-
temporary dispersed copies see cat.
nos. 27-28 and Richard Ertinghausen,
"An Illuminated Manuscript of Hafiz-i
Abru in Istanbul, Part I," *Kunst des
Orients* 2 (1955): 30-44.

Mu'izz al-ansab, dated A.H. 830
(A.D. 1426)
Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Pers. 67

Fawayid-i Ghiyathi, dated A.H. 835
(A.D. 1431)
Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, 4155

Khamse of Nizami, Herat, dated A.H.
Rabi' II 835 (A.D. December 1431)
(cat. no. 48)

Copied by Mahmud
502 folios with 38 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Leningrad, State Hermitage, VR-1000

Treatise on grammar of Abdul-Razzaq
Samarqandi, dated A.H. 841
(A.D. 1437-38)
Dedicated to Shahrukh
E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of
Persia* (Reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 1928), 3: 429.

Sitta of Attar, Herat, dated A.H. 27
Shawwal 841 (A.D. 23 April 1438)
(cat. no. 40)
Copied by Abdul-Malik
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on colored paper
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Library,
A.M. 3059

Khamse of Attar, Herat, c. 1438
(cat. no. 39)
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on colored paper
Istanbul, Türk ve İslam Eserleri
Muzesi, 1992

Muqmal-i Fasih of Fasih-i Khrwafi, dated
A.H. 845 (A.D. 1441-42)
Presented to Shahrukh
A. Safa, "Persian Literature in the
Timurid and Türkmen Periods," in *The
Cambridge History of Iran*, 6: 922.

Al-kashshaf 'an haq-iq al-tanzil of
Abu'l-Qaum al-Zamakhshari
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Bankipore Oriental Public Library,
cat. no. 1339-41

Jawhar al-dhat of Attar
333 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, A.F.384

Vessels and jewels
Gold
D.

Zayl-i Jami' al-tawarikh of Hafiz-i Abru
Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*,
3: 74; Woods, "Timurid Historio-
graphy," p. 96.

Ta'ashshuqnama of Sayyidi Ahmad ibn
Miranshah or Sayyidi Ahmad ibn
Umar Shavkh
Dedicated to Shahrukh

London, British Library, Add.7914.
ff. 273b-289b

Sultan Abu-Bakr ibn Muhammad-Juku
d. 1448/49

Poet (Persian)
D.

Sultan-Ali ibn Sultan-Mahmud
d. 1500

Poet
FH, as cited in Schimmel, "Babur
Padishah," p. 130.

Sultan-Husayn Mirza ibn Mansur
1438-1506

Poet (Turki)
B, p. 259.

Zafarnama of Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi,
Herat(?), dated A.H. 871 (A.D. 1467-68)
(cat. no. 147)
Copied by Sher Ali
539 folios with 6 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University,
Milton S. Eisenhower Library, John
Work Garrett Collection

Wine cup, Herat, dated A.H. 874
(A.D. 1470-71) (cat. no. 150)
Striped agate
A. Soudavar Collection

Khamse of Jami (first poem only), dated
A.H. 886 (A.D. 1481)
2 illustrations
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Tehran, Gulistan Palace Library, no. 709

Mathnawi-i ma'nawi of Jalaluddin
Rumi, Herat, dated A.H. 887 (A.D. 1483)
(cat. no. 99)
330 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper
Istanbul, Türk ve İslam Eserleri
Muzesi, 1905

Druan of Sultan-Husayn Mirza, Herat,
dated A.H. 890 (A.D. 1485)
Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Suppl.
Turc. 993

Gulistan of Sa'di, Herat(?), dated A.H.
Muharram 891 (A.D. January 1486)

(cat. no. 157)

Copied by Sultan-Ali Mashhadi

3 illustrations

Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper

Soudavar Collection

Bustan of Sa'di, Herat, dated A.H. Rajab

893 (A.D. June 1488) (cat. no. 146)

Copied by Sultan-Ali al-Katib

54 folios with 3 illustrations

Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper

Cairo, General Egyptian Book

Organization, Adab Fann 908

Diwan of Sultan-Husayn Mirza, Herat,

c. 1490 (cat. no. 148)

29 folios

Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper

Istanbul, Türk ve İslam Eserleri

Müzesi, 1926

Akhlāq-i Muḥsinī of Kashifi, dated

A.H. 900 (A.D. 1494–95)

Dedicated to Sultan-Husayn Mirza

Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*,

3: 443.

Jug, Herat(?), dated A.H. middle of

Sha'ban 903 (A.D. 11 April 1498)

(cat. no. 151)

Made by Muhammad ibn Shamsuddin

al-Ghuri

Brass inlaid with gold and silver

London, British Museum, 1962.7–18.1

Gulistan of Sa'di, Herat, dated A.H. 1

Muharram 906 (A.D. 28 July 1500)

(fig. 101)

Copied by Sultan-Ali Mashhadi

89 folios with 8 later illustrations

Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper

Geneva, Bodmer Foundation, Pers.

Ms. 30

Apologia of Sultan-Husayn Mirza

Tourkhan Gandjei, "Uno scritto

apologetico di Husain Mirza, sultano

del Khorasan," *Annali dell'Istituto**Oriente di Napoli*, n.s., vol. 3.

Naples, 1953, pp. 157–84.

Diwan of Mir Ali Sher Nawa'i, Herat

Copied by Sultan-Ali Mashhadi

205 folios

Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold
on paper

Tashkent, Borom Institute, Academy of

Sciences, no. 1995

*Sultan-Muhammad ibn Bayanqur ibn**Shahrukh*

1418–52

Poet (Persian)

D.

Sultan-Mahmud Mirza ibn Abu-Sa'ad

1451–99

Poet

B, p. 46.

Timur

1336–1405

Stone inscribed to commemorate battle
with Toqramish Khan, c. 1391

Leningrad, State Hermitage, N. N.

Poppe, "The Karasakpai Inscription by
Timur," *Travaux de Département Ori-**ental* 1(1939):185–87.

Oil lamp, Central Asia, c. 1397

(cat. no. 5A–C)

Made for the Shrine of Ahmad Yasavi

Brass inlaid with silver and gold

Oil reservoir and middle section: Paris,
Musée du Louvre, Section Islamique,
nos. 7080, 7079; base: Leningrad, State
Hermitage, SA-12686

Oil lamp, Central Asia, c. 1397

Made by Izzuddin ibn Tajuddin Isfahani

Brass inlaid with gold and silver

Leningrad, State Hermitage, SA-15832

Oil lamp, Central Asia, c. 1397

(cat. no. 4)

Made for the Shrine of Ahmad Yasavi

Brass inlaid with silver and gold

Leningrad, State Hermitage, SA-15931

Oil lamp, Central Asia, c. 1397

Made by Izzuddin ibn Tajuddin Isfahani

Brass inlaid with gold and silver

Turkestan, Shrine of Ahmad Yasavi, 63

Oil lamp, Central Asia, c. 1397

Made by Izzuddin ibn Tajuddin Isfahani

Brass inlaid with gold and silver

Turkestan, Shrine of Ahmad Yasavi, 63B

Oil lamp, Central Asia, c. 1397

Brass inlaid with gold and silver

Turkestan, Shrine of Ahmad Yasavi, 67,

68A

Basin, Central Asia, dated A.H. 20

Shawwal 801 (A.D. 25 June 1399) (fig. 4)

Executed by Abdul-Aziz

Bronze

Leningrad, State Hermitage, SA-15930

Roznama-yi Ghazavat-i Hindustan,

c. 1400

Composed by Ghiyathuddin Ali Yazdi

(completed under Shahrukh, c. 1413)

Woods, "Timurid Historiography,"

pp. 93–94.

Josh u Khurosh of Shaykh Mahmud

Zangi Ajami Kirmani

Presented to Timur, c. 1403–4

K.

Chinese porcelain

Ruy González de Clavijo, *Embassy to**Tamerlane*, 1403–1406, trans. Guy le
Strange (New York: Harper & Brothers,

1928), p. 224.

Zafarnama of Shami, dated A.H.

Ramadan 806 (A.D. March 1404)

Redaction

Sims, "Garrett Manuscript," pp. 34–38;

Woods, "Timurid Historiography," p. 85.

Futuhāt-i Miranshahi of Sa'd Allah

Kirmani

Woods, "Timurid Historiography,"

p. 83.

Koran

Copied by Sayyid Abdul-Qadir ibn

Abdul-Wahhab

Annemarie Schimmel, *Calligraphy and**Islamic Culture* (New York: New York

University Press, 1984), p. 22.

Koran

Copied by Umar al-Aqta'

QA, p. 64.

Koran

Copied by Umar al-Aqta'

QA, p. 64.

Precious stones

Emili Vasilevich Bretschneider, *Medi-**aeval Researches from Eastern Asiatic**Sources* (London: K. Paul Trubner,

1910), 2: 260–61.

Roznama-i futuhāt-i Hindustan of Qazi

Nasiruddin Umar

Woods, "Timurid Historiography,"

p. 83.

Tarikh-i khani

Sims, "Garrett Manuscript," 32.

Wall paintings at Bagh-i Dilgusha,

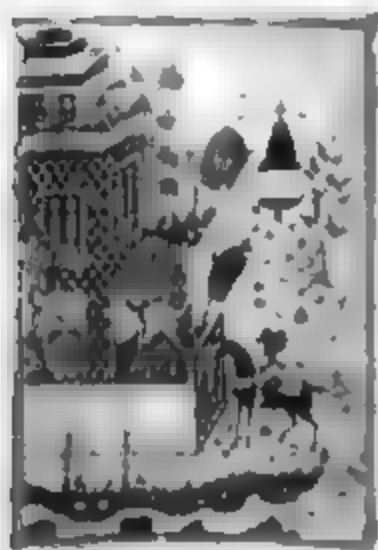
Samargand

B, p. 78.

- Wall paintings at Bagh-i Shimal, Samarqand
SAY, as cited in I. Stchoukine, *Les Peintures des manuscrits Timiurides* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale; Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1954), p. 1.
- Wall paintings at Samarqand
IA, as cited in *ibid.*, p. 4.
- Zafarnama* of Safiyuddin Khuttalani Samarqandi
Woods, "Timurid Historiography," p. 83.
- Zayl-i Josh u Khurosh* of Mawlana Qutbuddin ibn Shaykh Mahmud Zangi Ajami Kirmani
Woods, "Timurid Historiography," p. 83.
- Ulugh-Beg ibn Shahrukh**
1394-1449
- Koran stand, Samarqand, c. 1405-49 (fig. 26)
Inscribed with the name of Ulugh-Beg
Stone
Samarqand, Masjid-i Jami'
- Shams al-husan* of Tajuddin Salmani, dated A.H. 813 (A.D. 1410)
Commissioned by Shahrukh (completed under Ulugh-Beg)
Woods, "Timurid Historiography," p. 88.
- Box, Central Asia, c. 1420-49 (cat. no. 49)
Sandalwood inlaid with polychrome marquetry, gold fittings, and silk lining
Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Treasury, 2/1846
- Cup, Central Asia(?), c. 1420-49 (cat. no. 124)
Inscribed with the name of Ulugh-Beg
Jade (nephrite)
London, British Museum, OA 1959.12-20.1 (36).
- Jug, Iran or Central Asia, c. 1420-49 (fig. 46)
Inscribed with the name of Ulugh-Beg
Jade
Ishon, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 318
- Gravestone for Timur, c. 1425 (fig. 3)
Jade
Samarqand, Turb-i Amir
- Miftah al-Hisab* of Chivathuddin Jamshid Kashani, dated A.H. 830 (A.D. 1427)
Leningrad, State Public Library, Dorn 131
- Wust al-kawakib al-thabit* of al Sufi, Samarqand(?), c. 1430-40 (cat. no. 56)
247 folios with 74 colored drawings
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Arabe 5036
- Zij-i Turkani*, Samarqand(?), c. 1445 (cat. no. 55)
205 folios
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
A. Soudavar Collection
- Silk, jade, gold vessels, and saddle, c. 1445
Gifts from the Chinese emperor
Bretschneider, *Medieval Researches*, 2: 263.
- Several pairs of steel gates
Taken from Herat in 1448
Barthold, *Ulugh-Beg*, p. 154, n. 3.
- Ansab-i Mahmudi* of Sahhaf Ramakī Ghaznavi Darwish Muhammad
Dedicated to Ulugh-Beg
Ghazna Museum
- Astrolabe
Brass
Riazul Islam, *Calendar of Documents on Indo-Persian Relations (1500-1750)* (Tehran: Iranian Culture Foundation, Karachi: Institute of Central and West Asian Studies, 1979), 1: 183-84.
- Brass rings for astronomical observations
F. S. Kennedy, "The Exact Sciences in Timurid Iran," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, 6: 578
- Cup
Inscribed with the name of Ulugh-Beg
Jade
Benares, Bharat Kala Bhawan, 8860
- Double page painting
fig. 13
Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper
Washington, D.C., Freer Gallery of Art, 46.26 London, Kerr Collection, m. 76
- Historical text
DM.
- Hunting log
Compiled by Ulugh-Beg
D.
- Inscription in Jilan-uzi George Barthold, *Ulugh-Beg*, p. 83.
- Ruby
Inscribed with the name of Ulugh-Beg
Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri, or Memoir of Jahangir*, trans. A. Rogers, ed. H. Beveridge (Reprint, London, 1909-14 2: 195-96).
- Silk and silver
Gifts from the Chinese emperor
Bretschneider, *Medieval Researches*, 2: 262.
- Treatise on architecture and geometric designs of Abu'l-wafa Busjani
Dedicated to Ulugh-Beg
Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Pers. 164
- Ulus-i arba'a-i Chingizi*
K.
- Wall paintings at Ulugh-Beg's observatory, Samarqand
AR, as cited in Barthold, *Ulugh-Beg*, pp. 132-33.
- Umar ibn Miranshah ibn Timur**
1383-1407
- Zafarnama* of Shamsi, dated A.H. Ramadan 806 (A.D. March 1404)
Redaction commissioned by Timur for Umar ibn Miranshah
Sims, "Gartett Manuscript," pp. 34-35.
Woods, "Timurid Historiography," p. 81.

Repetition of Composition

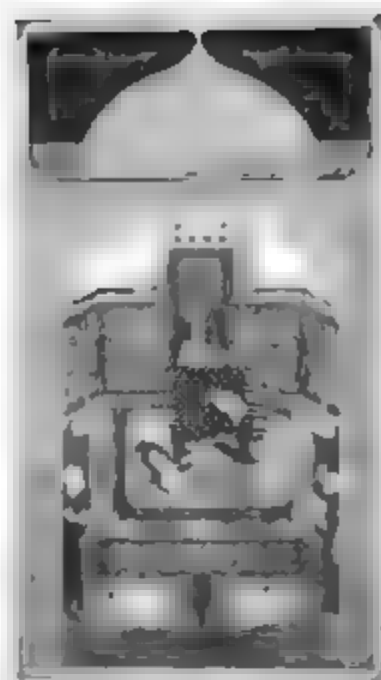
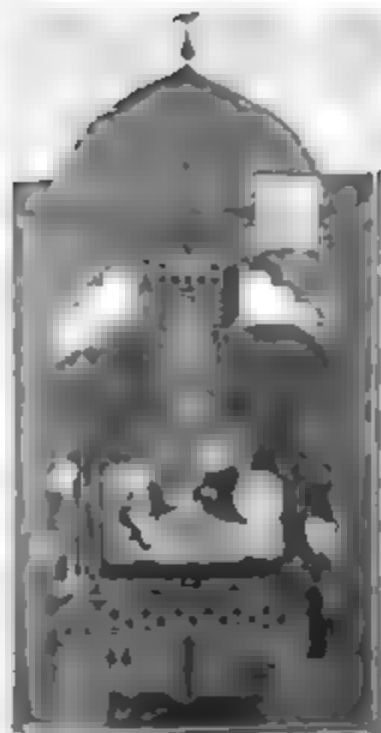
- 376 The repeated use of individual compositions is a particularly effective demonstration of one of the underlying principles that guided artistic production in the Timurid *kitabkhana*. These compositions appear in manuscripts with different texts, dates, places of production, and patrons. For example, Jalayirid compositions were frequently appropriated by Timurid artists (1a); Turcoman workshops in turn made use of compositions borrowed from Timurid sources (1d, 3c, 3d, 8b). While the examples illustrated here represent merely a preliminary list, they clearly document the central role played by repetition in the dynasty's creation of a codified visual aesthetic.



- 1a. "Humay before Humayun's Castle" from a *Diwan* of Khwaju Kirmani copied at Baghdad in 1396 (British Library, London, Add.18113, f. 18b).
- 1b. "Khusraw before Shirin's Castle" from a *Khamsa* of Nizami copied for Shahrukh ibn Timur at Herat in 1431 (State Hermitage, Leningrad, VR-1000, f. 112a).
- 1c. "Khusraw before Shirin's Castle" from a *Khamsa* of Nizami copied for Ismat al-Dunya, wife of Muhammad-Juki ibn Shahrukh, at Herat in 1445–46 (Topkapı Sarayı Library, Istanbul, H.781, f. 73b).
- 1d. "Khusraw before Shirin's Castle" from a *Khamsa* of Nizami copied at Isfahan(?) in 1463 (Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ms.137, f. 66a).



13a



13c



13d

377

- 13a "Bahram Gur Entertained in the Black Pavilion by the Indian Princess" from a *Khamsa* of Nizami copied as part of an *Anthology* for Iskandar ibn Umar-Shaykh at Shiraz in 1410-11 (British Library, London, Add.27261, f. 160b)
- 13b "Bahram Gur Entertained in the Black Pavilion by the Indian Princess" from a *Khamsa* of Nizami copied c. 1440-50 (Keir Collection, London)
- 13c "Bahram Gur Entertained in the Black Pavilion by the Indian Princess" from a *Khamsa* of Nizami copied c. 1425-50 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 13.228.13, f. 23b)
- 13d "Bahram Gur Entertained in the Black Pavilion by the Indian Princess" from a *Khamsa* of Nizami copied for Ismat al-Dunya, wife of Muhammad Juki ibn Shahrukh, at Herat in 1445-46 (Topkapı Sarayı Library, London, H.781, f. 168b).



13a



13b

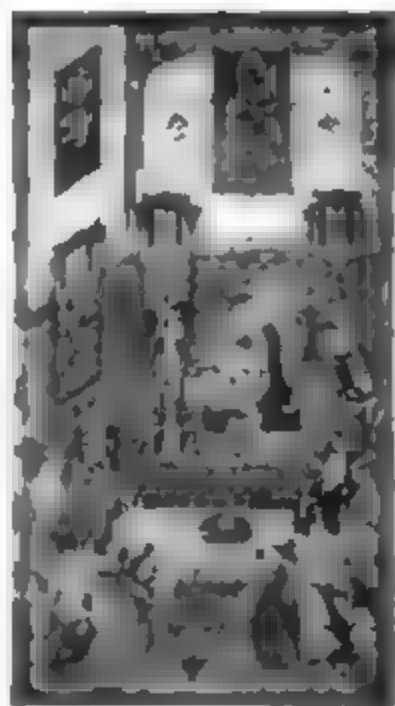


13c

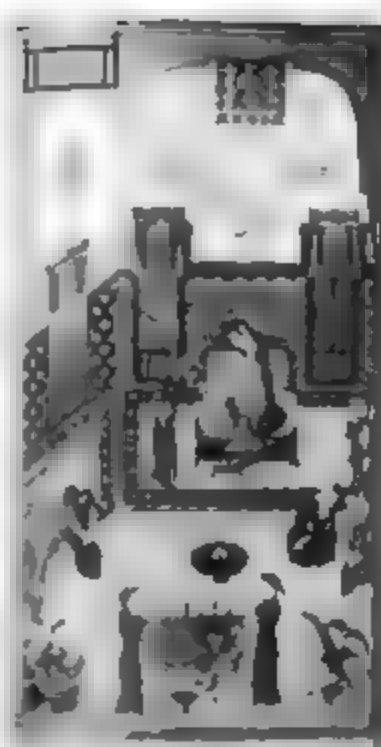
- 13a "Bahram Gur Hunting" from a *Khamsa* of Nizami copied c. 1425-50 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 13.228.13, f. 103)
- 13b "Bahram Gur Hunting" from a *Khamsa* of Nizami copied for Ismat al-Dunya, wife of Muhammad-Juki ibn Shahrukh, at Herat in 1445-46 (Topkapı Sarayı Library, Istanbul, H.781, f. 154b)
- 13c "Bahram Gur Hunting" from a *Tarjuma-i tarikh-i Iskandari* of Bal'ami copied in 1470 (Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ms.144, f. 157b)



4a

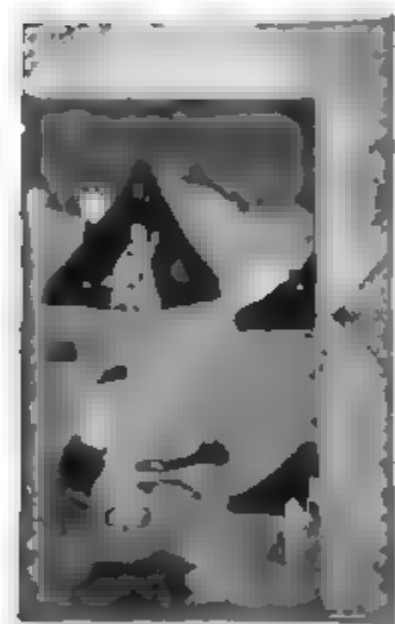


4b



4c

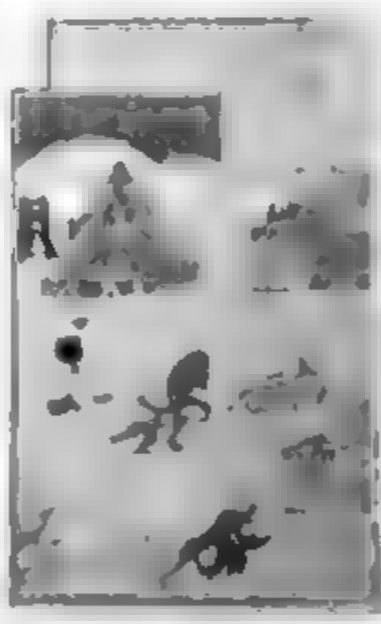
- 4a. "Nushaba Recognizing Iskandar by His Portrait" from a *Khamisa* of Nizami copied as part of an *Anthology* for Iskandar ibn Umar-Shaykh at Shiraz in 1410-11 (British Library, London, Add.27261, f. 225b).
- 4b. "Humay in the Fairy Palace" from a *Humay u Humayun* of Khwaju Kirmani copied for Baysunghur ibn Shahrukh at Herat in 1427-28 (Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, N.E.382, f. 10b).
- 4c. "Nushaba Recognizing Iskandar by His Portrait" from a *Khamisa* of Nizami copied for Ismat al-Dunya, wife of Muhammad-Juki ibn Shahrukh, at Herat in 1445-46 (Topkapi Sarayı Library, Istanbul, H.781, f. 244b).



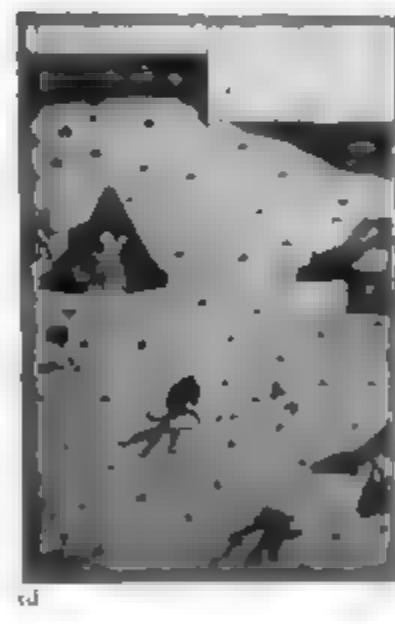
5a



5b



5c



5d

- 5a. "Layla and Majnun Fainting at Their Meeting" from a *Khamisa* of Nizami copied as part of an *Anthology* for Iskandar ibn Umar-Shaykh at Shiraz in 1410-11 (British Library, London, Add.27261, f. 131b).
- 5b. "Layla and Majnun Fainting at Their Meeting" from a *Khamisa* of Nizami copied c. 1430 (Kerr Collection, London).
- 5c. "Layla and Majnun Fainting at Their Meeting" from a *Khamisa* of Nizami copied for Ismat al-Dunya, wife of Muhammad-Juki ibn Shahrukh, at Herat in 1445-46 (Topkapi Sarayı Library, Istanbul, H.781, f. 138a).
- 5d. "Layla and Majnun Fainting at Their Meeting" from a *Khamisa* of Nizami copied for Pir-Budaq Qaraqoyunlu at Baghdad in 1461 (Topkapi Sarayı Library, Istanbul, H.761, f. 140a).

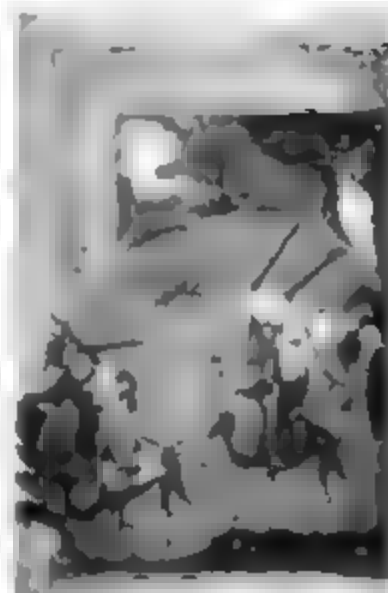


6a



6b

- 6a. "The Khaqan of Chin Hunting" from a *Humay u Humayun* of Khwaju Kirmani copied for Baysunghur ibn Shahrukh at Herat in 1427-28 (Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, N.F.382, f. 32b)
- 6b. "Bahram Gur's Master Shot" from a *Khamse* of Nizami copied c. 1425-30 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 13.228.13, f. 17b).

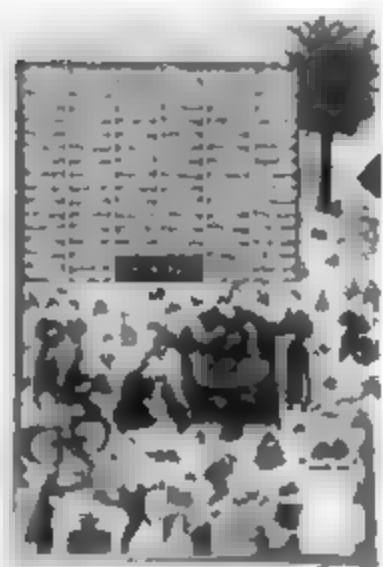


7a

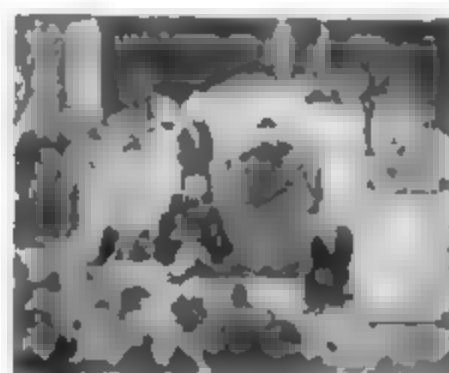


7b

- 7a. "The Battle of the Clans" from a *Khamse* of Nizami copied as part of an *Anthology* for Iskandar ibn Umar-Shaykh at Shiraz in 1410-11 (British Library, London, Add.27261, f. 109a).
- 7b. "The Battle of the Clans" from a *Khamse* of Nizami copied for Shahrukh ibn Timur at Herat in 1431 (State Hermitage, Leningrad, VR-1000, f. 185a)



8a



8b (detail)

- 8a. "Jamshid Teaching the Crafts" from a *Shahnama* of Firdawsi copied for Baysunghur ibn Shahrukh at Herat in 1430 (Gulistan Palace Library, Tehran, no. 61).
- 8b. "Jamshid Teaching the Crafts" from a *Tarjuma-i tarikh-i Tabari* of Bal'ami copied in 1470 (Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ms.144, f. 20a)

Glossary

380

amir
military commander

bagh
garden

bakhshi
Originally designating a Buddhist monk in the Mongol empire, in the Timurid realm the word referred to scribes or functionaries with knowledge of higher Turkic culture, including the Turki language and Uighur script.

banna'i
revetment of glazed and unglazed bricks that form patterns or inscriptions

cuerda seca (dry cord)
an overglaze-painted tile technique in which colors, to prevent their running together, are demarcated by a greasy substance, burned off in firing

dawlatkhana
hall of public audience

debacha
elaborate sunburst medallion design

Diez albums
four albums of drawings, paintings, calligraphy, and designs presented to Heinrich Friedrich von Diez, Prussian ambassador to the Ottoman court in Istanbul from 1784 to 1791, now in the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, West Berlin

diwan
collected works of a poet; also a government ministry or council

Friday mosque
see *masjid-i jami'*

ghazal (lovers' exchanges)
lyric verse form principally amatory in tone and vocabulary

hadith (traditions of the Prophet)
an account of the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad and a principal source of the *shari'a*

hauz
Open, three-sided porch normally covered with a pointed barrel vault, it frequently fronted a domed chamber.

khamisa (quintet)
generally refers to five poems written by Jalaluddin Ilyas ibn Yusuf Nizami during the second half of the twelfth century and frequently imitated by later poets

khan (prince or lord)
Turkish title of authority in post-Mongol Iran and Central Asia

khanqah
endowed residence for Sufis

khaqan (emperor)
Turkish title of authority

khutba
Often political in content, this sermon, delivered on a Friday in the great mosque by a ruler or his sanctioned representative, contained prayers for the head of state and was historically viewed as a declaration of sovereignty.

kitabkhana
library or royal workshop

kukaltash (foster brother/sister or milk brother/sister)
apparently an institution designed to link important non-affiliated Turco-Mongol families with the ruling house

kuragan (imperial bridegroom or son-in-law)
title used by Timur and some of his descendants to reinforce their association through marriage with Chingizids

ma'abid
places of worship

madrasa
Muslim school devoted to theology and canon law

majlis
A formal court audience or informal social gathering, in the late Timurid period the *majlis* served as a literary assembly representing the principal forum for poetic expression.

masjid-i jami'
the major congregational mosque of a city where official Friday services are held

mathnawi
verse form consisting of two hemistichs (half-lines) that rhyme independently of other lines, used for epics and didactic poems

maulana (Our Lord)
Arabic title of respect

mihrab
niche in a place of prayer indicating the direction (*qibla*) of prayer, i.e., toward Mecca.

mi'raj
Muhammad's nocturnal ascent to Heaven

Mughulistan (country of the Mughuls)
Persian term for the lands of the Mughuls (Mongols and Mongolized Turks), nomads in the eastern region of the former Chaghatayid Khanate who long resisted the influence of Islam

musalla
open place of congregation for the celebration of major religious festivals

nisba
name of attribution, usually to a place

qibla
the direction of Muslim prayer, i.e. toward Mecca

qit'a
a calligraphic découpage technique in which individual letters are cut from colored papers and pasted onto a surface

Rab'-i Rashidi
enormous tomb complex built by Rashiduddin at Tabriz in the early fourteenth century, which included a scriptorium

sauwāmi
monasteries

shah (king)

Shah-i Zinda (the Living King)
funerary complex located north of Samar-
qand on the mound of the ancient city of
Afrasiab

shari'a
Islamic law based principally on the Koran
and *hadith*

shaykh
Arabic title of respect normally reserved
for a distinguished scholar or head of a
mystical order but often simply incorpo-
rated into names (e.g., Umar-Shaykh)

sultan
Arabic title signifying supreme secular
authority, primarily associated with rulers
of Turkish origin

soyurghal
a tax-exempt government grant of land
originally given in exchange for military
service

tamgha
sales and customs tax

tadhkira (notices)
memoirs or biographies, often anecdotal,
collected in a single volume

Turki
native tongue of the Timurids, also known
as Chaghatay or Eastern Turkish

Uighur
Central Asian Turkic language and script,
the latter derived from Syriac; script some-
times used for Turki during Timurid
period

ulema
religious classes

ulus
tribal group or nation

uzier
minister in charge of fiscal affairs of state

waqf
land or property perpetually endowed to a
pious institution

waqfiyya
deed of *waqf* endowment

zakat
alms levies

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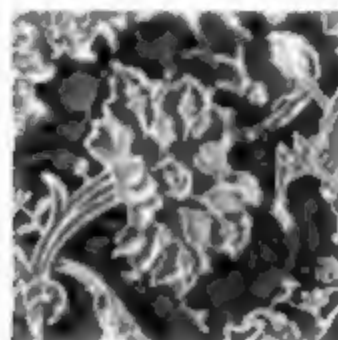
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